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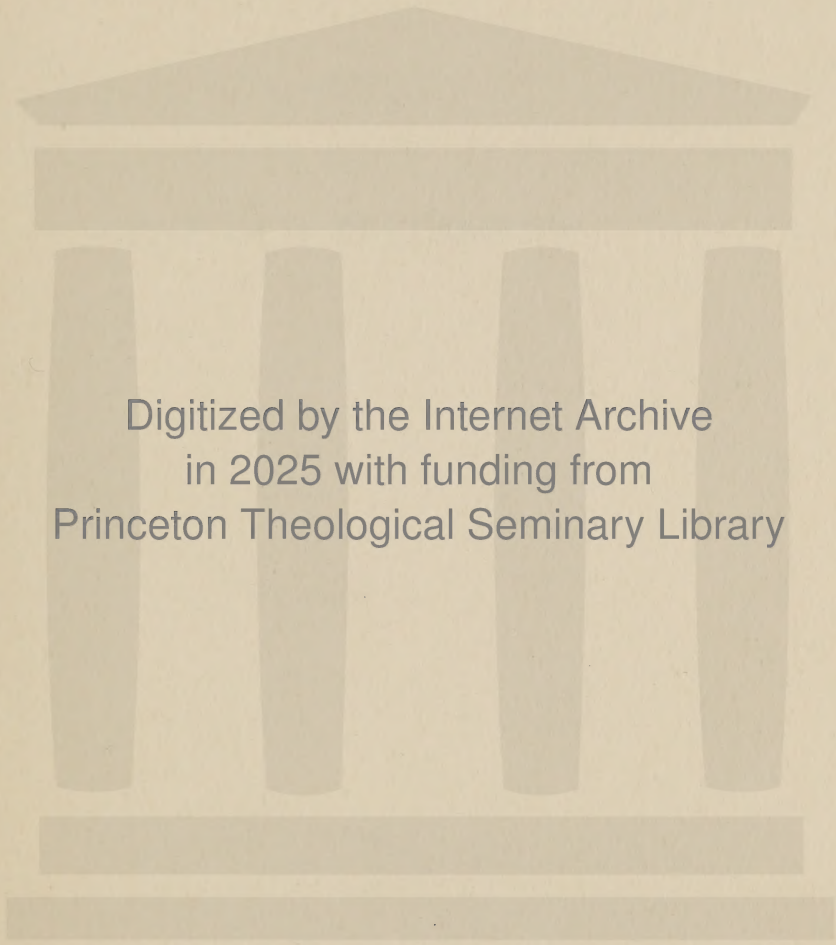
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THE OLD TESTAMENT

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A Study
OF
The Old Testament

BY

HERBERT MORRISON GALE
WELLESLEY COLLEGE

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FOREWORD

This book is based upon the Bible itself. In it are reproduced many of the more important passages which provide an understanding of Old Testament history and Hebrew religion. There is included all of the material recommended by the National Association of Biblical Instructors in its "Course of Study for Secondary Schools Offering a Unit of Bible for College Entrance" (1951 edition).

Two sizes of type are employed. Biblical material appears in the larger size. Comments and explanations (in the form of footnotes and introductions to chapters) are printed in the smaller type. Thus one is constantly aware whether the Bible itself or a statement about the Bible is being read.

The Biblical translation used is that of the Revised Standard Version (1952). It should be noted that in this translation the proper name for deity (*Jahweh*) which appears in the Hebrew text is generally reproduced as "the LORD" (in small capital letters). This is in conformity with the Hebrew practice of *saying* "LORD" when the name *Jahweh* was *read*. Upon occasion, when the Hebrew text has, together, the words meaning "Lord Jahweh," there appears in this translation the expression "Lord GOD," so as to avoid the duplication of "Lord LORD." The point to remember is this: LORD or GOD (appearing in small capital letters) are words which indicate the use of the proper name *Jahweh* in the Hebrew text.

Wherever reference is made to a particular note (footnote) it is always to one which appears in the chapter then being read unless otherwise specified.

Special appreciation is due to the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, copyright owner, and to Thomas Nelson and Sons, publisher, for permission to quote from the Revised Standard Version. Special thanks are due to Miss Rachel H. King of the Northfield School for Girls for many helpful suggestions.

FROM THE FOREWORD TO THE PREVIOUS EDITION

Appreciation is also due to Dr. Elmer A. Leslie for permission to quote from *The Prophets Tell Their Own Story* his translation of *Isaiah* 5:7 (following G. W. Wade), and to use his classification of the *Psalms;* to Charles Scribner's Sons for permission to quote two statements found in *Personalities of the Old Testament,* by Professor Fleming James; and to Harper and Brothers for permission to include several quotations from *The Bible: A New Translation* by James Moffatt, Harper and Brothers, publishers.

The writer is particularly grateful to Miss Mira B. Wilson, Principal, to Mr. Harold B. Ingalls and Miss Helen Van Voast, members of the Bible Department, for suggestions and criticisms, to Miss Louise Kingsbury and her assistants in the registrar's office and to Mr. Frank Pearsall for much help in the preparation of this material.

H. M. G.

CHAPTER I

EARLY HEBREW TALES

The first book of the Bible includes a number of stories giving men's ideas about the world as they thought it must have been "in the beginning," that is, at the time of its origin. In fact, the word "Genesis" means "origin."

During the period of the writing of the early documents people were asking many questions. Just as a child today will wonder what makes things grow, so those people were raising such questions as these: How did the world begin? Why are there seven days in the week? And why do we observe the seventh (or Sabbath) day as a "holy" day? Why is man supreme among all the creatures of the world? Why are there two sexes? How did sin originate? Why must men toil? Why must women suffer in childbirth? Why are women regarded as inferior to men? Why do men die? Why are animals considered the best kind of sacrifice? Why does the rainbow appear? Why are there so many peoples and languages in the world?

As these stories are read, notice how each is intended to answer specific questions of this sort. Observe especially that in all of them it is the *religious* explanation that is important. The writers were attempting to show primarily that, from the beginning, behind all things and responsible for all things there has been the creative and controlling activity of one supreme God. It is His will that has determined the nature of the universe. His purposes have governed the course of all history. In Him alone can be found the ultimate answer to every question.

In describing the methods by which God fulfilled His plans and purposes it is only natural that the writers accepted the common "scientific" ideas of their day. Many of these ideas modern science has corrected. But men of modern science, together with men of modern philosophy and religion, all bear testimony to the amazing quality of thought which the early Hebrew writers demonstrated in the realm with which they were chiefly concerned, the realm of *religious* truth, the realm which deals with the fundamental relationship of the universe and man to God.

In their general features the stories which appear in the early chapters of the book of *Genesis* were known also among many people besides the Hebrews,—Babylonians, Phoenicians, Persians, Egyptians. But whereas the versions of the stories told among most of these peoples included myths about a multitude of gods, demons, and monsters, the Hebrew account is the only one which aims at revealing the creative activity of a single purposeful and supreme deity.

Thus the Hebrew writers utilized the common "science" and the common myths and legends of their age. They did so, not to be scientific or literary primarily, but rather to give a religious answer to questions which were being asked. Their illustrations may include, in the physical realm, ideas which modern science has improved upon; but the truths they sought to illustrate remain as fundamental concepts in contemporary thought. Theirs was a religious insight unequaled in the ancient world,—the recognition of an intelligent, purposeful, creative deity standing behind the universe and operating within it.

Originally *Genesis* was not regarded as a separate book but rather as the first of five volumes known as the Pentateuch. These constituted the so-called *Torah,* a term generally translated "Law."

The Pentateuch was not all written at one time by a single author. Material from at least four separate documents was gradually combined to form the Pentateuch as it is now known. These early documents are frequently designated the "sources of the Pentateuch."

(Some scholars prefer the expression, "sources of the Hexateuch," since material from them is also to be found in the sixth book of the Old Testament, *Joshua,* as well as in the first five. Still other scholars believe that these sources were yet more extensive, including some material found even in *Judges, I* and *II Samuel,* and *I Kings.* See the introductions to Chapters VI and VII.)

The earliest of these sources is the so-called J document, written around 850 B.C. It is called J because in it the writer, at the very beginning of his narrative, uses for deity the name *Jahweh* (sometimes incorrectly reproduced as *Jehovah),* a name by which the Hebrews at first distinguished their God from the gods of other peoples. (Writers of other sources begin to use this proper name only later, when in their accounts they reach the point in history where there is described the revealing of that name to Moses. See Note 19 in Chapter V. See also the Foreword for an explanation as to the use of "the LORD" as a substitute for the name *Jahweh* in the translation employed here.) The J document was written in the southern Hebrew kingdom; this is easily remembered because the name of that kingdom (Judah) as well as the name of its capital (Jerusalem) also begin with the letter J.

The next in order, the E document, was written around 750 B.C. It has been called E because the writer refers to deity as *Elohim* (coming from *El,* the general Hebrew word meaning "God" or "god," and translated as "God" in this text). E was composed in the northern kingdom of Israel, of which the chief tribe was Ephraim.

The material found in J and E was combined into a single document (JE) about 650 B.C.

The document called D, from *Deuteronomy* (a word meaning "second law"), appeared in 621 B.C. This was combined with JE (to form JED) sometime between 600 B.C. and 550 B.C., although in the combination it was kept intact as a single large block of material.

The last of the four documents which were used as sources for the Pentateuch is called P; it was written by priests about 500 B.C. and reflects the emphases and the later thought of their time. Final editors, about 400 B.C., combined the P material with that of JED, using P as a framework for the whole. Thus there appeared the final form, JEDP, a common designation for the Pentateuch.

In outline the various stages in the above process are as follows:

J	c. 850 B.C.
E	c. 750 B.C.
J + E = JE	c. 650 B.C.
D	621 B.C.
JE + D = JED	600-550 B.C.
P	c. 500 B.C.
JED + P = JEDP (Pentateuch)	c. 400 B.C.

THE CREATION: THE P ACCOUNT[1]—Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a

1:1,2 (P) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

3,4 And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

1. In their original forms J and P both included versions of the creation story. When the sources were combined the later priestly account was placed at the beginning. In it God is represented as performing acts of creation during six days of the week, resting upon the seventh day. The author has removed all of the elements of polytheism and superstition which abound in the early Babylonian parallels, and has used the story to proclaim the one true ruler of the universe, the God of Israel.

5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters,
7 and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the
8 waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together
10 into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called
11 Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it
12 was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each
13 according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

14 And God said, "Let there he lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons
15 and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the
16 heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to
17 rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament
18 of the heavens to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that
19 it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens."
21 So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every
22 winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters
23 in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according
25 to their kinds." And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping

27 thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply,
and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the
sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves
29 upon the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant
yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with
30 seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the
earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the
earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green
31 plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made,
and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morn-
ing, a sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of
2 them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done,
and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.
3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested
from all his work which he had done in creation.

4a These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were
created.

THE CREATION: THE J ACCOUNT[2]—Genesis 2:4b-25

2:4b (J) In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,
5 when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had
yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth,
6 and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the
7 earth and watered the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God
formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the
8 breath of life; and man became a living being. And the LORD God
planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he
9 had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree
that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the
midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided
11 and became four rivers.[3] The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one
12 which flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and

2. Note the various features which characterize this earlier version of the creation story and distinguish it from the P account: (1) the use of *Jahweh* in references to deity (remembering that where this translation uses "the LORD," the Hebrew text has *Jahweh*); (2) the order in which the various phases of creation occurred, especially the time of man's appearance; (3) the anthropomorphism (Jahweh is described as though he were a human being); (4) the general style (this is a folk-tale, not a studied literary composition).

3. Uncertainty exists concerning the identity of the first two rivers named in the following sentences; the third and fourth are the Tigris and Euphrates respectively.

13 the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The
name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which flows around the
14 whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel, which
flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till
16 it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may
17 freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of
good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you
shall die."
18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;
19 I will make him a helper fit for him." So out of the ground the LORD God
formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought
them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man
20 called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to
all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but
21 for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God
caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of
22 his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God
had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the
23 man. Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."[4]

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife,
25 and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked,
and were not ashamed.

TEMPTATION AND DISOBEDIENCE[5]—Genesis 3

3:1 (J) Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild animal that
the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall

4. A kind of word-play is involved here. The Hebrew for "Woman" is *ishshah;* the word for "Man" is *ish.*

5. The Hebrew tale included here is similar, in many respects, to the Babylonian epic of creation. It represents, however, a far loftier stage of religious thinking.

This account follows logically the stories of creation. It has just been stated that God is the Creator of the world and all things in it. This story expresses the conviction, however, that the *evil* in the world is due to *man's* disobedience. Although Adam appears in the story as an individual person, he is intended to represent man generally. The very name, Adam, is a Hebrew word which means "man"; it is used frequently in the Old Testament with this meaning. But the narrative includes more than an attempt to provide an explanation for the origin of sin, toil, pain, and death. It pictures vividly the nature of the inner conflict called "temptation." Even more important, it is intended to reveal the terrible outcome of disobedience to the divine will. The creation story proclaimed the supremacy

2 not eat of any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent,
3 "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,
4 neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' " But the serpent said to the
5 woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband,
7 and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the pres-
9 ence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God
10 called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was
11 naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked?
12 Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me
13 fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me,
14 and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all cattle,
and above all wild animals;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."
16 To the woman he said,
"I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

of Jahweh; this one provides the corollary: because Jahweh is the God of creation mankind must live according to His will or else suffer the consequences of disobedience.

The serpent here is the symbol of the power of evil that is in the world. It seems to correspond to the monster in the Babylonian form of the tale. The idea of forbidden fruit is to be found in the folklore of numerous peoples.

17 And to Adam he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 In the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."

20 The man called his wife's name Eve,[6] because she was the mother of
21 all living. And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take
23 also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"—therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

CAIN AND ABEL[7]—Genesis 4:1-16

4:1 (J) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain,
2 saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."[8] And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller

6. The Hebrew form, *Ḥavvah,* involves the idea of "living" or "life." This explains the following clause.

7. No parallel to this story has been discovered among other early peoples. The tale goes back to a time when the Hebrews were nomadic shepherds, despising the settled life of agricultural tribes. The purpose here seems to have been to explain and to justify the Hebrew attitude that tending flocks was superior to tilling the soil, and that the sacrifice of animals from the flocks was better than the sacrifice of the "fruit of the ground." Just why Jahweh approved of the one and disapproved of the other is not made clear, although some scholars believe an explanation may have been given in the original form of the story. Cain is thought by some to be the personification of agricultural tribes (perhaps the Canaanites), and Abel that of pastoral tribes (such as the Hebrews). As the story appears now, of course, the idea of social responsibility is emphasized.

8. Here there is a play on words. In sound "Cain" is similar to the Hebrew *qanah,* meaning "acquired" or "gotten."

of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. Now the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?[9] If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him.[10] Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod,[11] east of Eden.

THE FLOOD[12]—Genesis 6:1 - 9:17

6:1 (J) When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God[13] saw that the daughters of men

9. In Hebrew the following verse is not very clear. The English reconstruction must not be taken too seriously.

10. The tribal "mark" was a protection. Hostile persons would refrain from killing the man who bore it for fear the tribe to which he belonged (whose "mark" he bore) would take revenge upon them.

11. That is, "Wandering."

12. Inscriptions on fragments of tablets which have been discovered prove that a version of the flood story was current in Babylonia as early as 2000 B.C. Some of the Biblical and Babylonian accounts have the same details: the hero is informed that a flood is imminent; persons and animals are taken into the ark; an unusual rainfall occurs; seven is a favorite number; all living things not in the ark perish; as the waters recede the ark settles upon a mountain; birds are released three times to see if the waters have subsided; after the flood the hero offers a sacrifice, the odor of which is smelled by deity; there is the assurance that such a flood will never again occur. The number of these similarities indicates clearly the Babylonian origin of the tradition. (This is not strange, since, as shall be

3 were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but
4 his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim[14] were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renoun.[15]

5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil con-
6 tinually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and
7 it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping
8 things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

9 (P) These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man,
10 blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with
12 violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh
13 had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence
14 through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and
15 out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three

seen in the Abraham stories, the Hebrews are supposed to have come originally from Babylonia.) The Biblical account, however, reveals far greater advance in religious thinking. The Babylonian forms of the story refer to many capricious deities who deceive mankind, struggle among themselves, fear the greatness of the flood, and gather "like flies" over the sacrifice. The narrative in *Genesis,* on the other hand, describes the activity of one supreme God, who causes the flood as just punishment for sin, and who is characterized by affection rather than caprice.

The Babylonian tradition may have been due originally to the memory of some particularly disastrous inundation of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, caused, perhaps, by tidal waves sweeping up from the Persian Gulf at the time of the usual spring floods. Excavations in Babylonia have brought to light layers of sediment deposited there by unusually great floods occurring in early periods.

Versions of the flood story appeared in both the J and P documents. These have been combined in the *Genesis* account. But instead of including J and P material in large blocks, as he did in the case of previous stories, the compiler or editor has woven together the various details of the two versions into one continuous narrative. Read the story, not only in its present completed form, but also as it appeared in the original documents: that is, go through the material once reading only what originally was in J; repeat, reading only what was in P. Note, especially, the differences with regard to the number of animals taken into the ark, and also with regard to the duration of the flood.

13. Angelic beings of some sort seem to be meant here.

14. This term is obscure. The word has at times been translated "giants." The writer seems to refer to the offspring of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men."

15. Verses 1-4 seem to come from an early mythology. Their inclusion here is not entirely logical. They were inserted here, apparently, as offering an example of the kind of sinfulness giving rise to the flood.

hundred cubits,[16] its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.
16 Make a roof[17] for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and set the door
of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks.
17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all
flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is
18 on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant[18] with you; and
you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons'
19 wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two
of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male
20 and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals ac-
cording to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to
21 its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also
take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall
22 serve as food for you and for them." Noah did this; he did all that God
commanded him.

7:1 (J) Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your
household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this
2 generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and
his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his
3 mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to
4 keep their kind alive upon the face of all the earth. For in seven days I
will send rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living
5 thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." And
Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

6 (P) Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon
7 the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with
8 him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals,
and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that
9 creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female, went into the ark
10 with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. (J) And after seven days the
waters of the flood came upon the earth.

11 (P) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on
the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the
12 great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. (J)
13 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. (P) On the very
same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's
14 wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, they and
every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle according to their
kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its
15 kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort. They

16. A "cubit" is the equivalent of approximately eighteen or twenty inches.
17. Or, "window."
18. A "covenant" is a bargain, treaty, pact, or agreement.

went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was
16 the breath of life. And they that entered, male and female of all flesh, went
in as God had commanded him; (J) and the LORD shut him in.
17 The flood continued forty days upon the earth; and the waters in-
18 creased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. (P) The
waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark
19 floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily
20 upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were
covered; the waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen
21 cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, cattle,
beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm upon the earth, and every man;
22 (J) everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life
23 died. He blotted out every living thing which was upon the face of the
ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they
were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were
24 with him in the ark. (P) And the waters prevailed upon the earth a
hundred and fifty days.
8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that
were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and
2 the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the
3 heavens were closed, (J) the rain from the heavens was restrained, and
the waters receded from the earth continually. (P) At the end of a hun-
4 dred and fifty days the waters had abated; and in the seventh month, on
the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest upon the moun-
5 tains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month;
in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the moun-
tains were seen.
6 (J) At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which
7 he had made, and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the
8 waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from
9 him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the
dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark,
for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put forth his
10 hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. He waited an-
11 other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the
dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth a freshly
plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the
12 earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent forth the dove; and
she did not return to him any more.
13 (P) In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of
the month, the waters were dried from off the earth; (J) and Noah re-
moved the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the
14 ground was dry. (P) In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of
15,16 the month, the earth was dry. Then God said to Noah, "Go forth from

17 the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.
Bring forth with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds
and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they
may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon
18 the earth." So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons'
19 wives with him. And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird,
everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the
ark.
20 (J) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean ani-
21 mal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And
when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in his heart, "I
will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of
man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every
22 living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and
harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not
cease."
9:1 (P) And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful
2 and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you
shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air,
upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into
3 your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food
4 for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only
5 you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I
will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of
6 man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds
the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in
7 his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly
on the earth and multiply in it."
8,9 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I will
10 establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with
every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every
11 beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my
covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters
of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."
12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me
and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future genera-
13 tions: I set my bow[19] in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant
14 between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the
15 bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between
me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall
16 never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the
clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant be-

19. A rainbow.

tween God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."
17 God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

THE TOWER OF BABEL[20]—Genesis 11:1-9

11:1,2 (J) Now the whole earth had one language and few words. And as men migrated in the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar[21] and
3 settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen
4 for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves,
5 lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had
6 built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and
7 nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not un-
8 derstand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.
9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

20. This story was probably first told in an attempt to explain the origin of different languages and the confusion or misunderstanding caused by them. The tradition probably arose as people observed with wonder some Babylonian temple (called a "ziggurat") which was pyramid-like in form and extended high into the air. As the story is used in its present setting, it seems to suggest the disastrous effect of human pride. It is futile for man to think that he can make his own way through his own efforts alone. It is God, and not man, who is supreme.

Babel is identified as Babylonia. In the story the name Babel is said to mean "confusion," since the Hebrew word for "confusion" is similar in sound.

21. Another name for Babylonia.

CHAPTER II

THE ABRAHAM STORIES

The Hebrews thought of Abraham as the "Father" of their race. He and his immediate descendants are frequently designated as the "Patriarchs."

Abraham lived around 2000 B.C., more than a thousand years before the writing of the documents which describe him. It is to be expected, therefore, that the accounts of his life, as they were told and re-told during all of those years, should be colored by the later experiences and beliefs of the Hebrew tribes. It is not strange that the people of later generations should attempt to trace back to him many of their hopes and aspirations and much of their religious faith. In the reports concerning him we shall thus expect to find some material that is authentic history and also material which represents later thinking and conjecture with regard to the origins of the Hebrew race and religion.

Some scholars are inclined to believe that when Abraham and the other patriarchs are described the references are not so much to historical personages as to tribes known by those names. Abraham thus becomes, according to this view, not an individual, but a tribe; it is not a man and his immediate family alone who wander from place to place, but an entire tribe that is in migration. This interpretation must be at least partly true. It seems probable, however, that in some passages the accounts may concern individuals; in others entire tribes may be involved, led, perhaps, by the individuals whose names are given. As the stories are read it will be well to think of both possibilities.

Abraham, traditionally, lived at first in "Ur of the Chaldeans." "Chaldea" is here used for Babylonia. The city of Ur was situated in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, where the great Babylonian empire arose. Extremely interesting archaeological excavations have been made at Ur. Buildings which stood in Abraham's time have been uncovered. Inscriptions which have been discovered among the ruins there include the name "Abraham," indicating that it was indeed known and borne by certain men during that period of history.

ABRAHAM MIGRATES[1]—Genesis 11:27 - 12:9

11:27 (P) Now these are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of
28 Abram,[2] Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. (J) Haran

1. In this story we have the account of the Hebrews emerging in history as a separate and distinct people. Why they departed from Babylonia is not certain. Perhaps it was because the Babylonian rulers, among them the great Hammurabi, required the worship of the sun-god, and Abraham and his family wished to be free to worship in their own way. Perhaps Abraham's migration was motivated somewhat by the dangers which seemed to be presented by the pressure of the Elamites to the east. In the story, at least, the religious motive appears to have been the more important, for the records represent Abraham as an exceedingly devout man. The migration was through the so-called Fertile Crescent, which extended from the Tigris-Euphrates delta to the territory around Haran in northern Syria and then down into Canaan, now called Palestine.

2. "Abram" and "Abraham" seem to be different forms of the same name; the later priestly writers, however, elsewhere (*Genesis* 17:1-8, omitted in this text) introduce an account reporting a change from one form to the other.

died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chal-
29 deans. And Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram's wife was
Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the
30 father of Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.
31 (P) Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson,
and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth
together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but
32 when they came to Haran,[3] they settled there. The days of Terah were two
hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

12:1 (J) Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your
2 kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I
will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name
3 great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and
him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth
will bless themselves."[4]

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.
5 (P) Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And
Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their
possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten
in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had
6 come to the land of Canaan, (J) Abram passed through the land to the
place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were
7 in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your de-
scendants I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who
8 had appeared to him. Thence he removed to the mountain on the east of
Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east;
and there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.
9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.[5]

ABRAM IN EGYPT[6]—Genesis 12:10-20

12:10 (J) Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to
11 Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.[7] When he
was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a

3. Haran was an important town in the territory called Paddan-aram (Field of Aram), located in what is now known as Syria.

4. Or, "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

5. The "Negeb" was a term applied to a semiarid district in southern Judah.

6. This story will undoubtedly raise certain ethical questions. It must be remembered that in these early days moral obligations of truthfulness and honesty seemed to be regarded as applying only within one's tribe. The tribe was the all-important unit. Other passages in *Genesis* (*Gen.* 20 and 26:1-11, not reproduced here) present what seem to be two different versions of the same story.

7. Since Abraham was a nomadic shepherd it was necessary, in time of drought, to seek land which would provide adequate pasture.

12 woman beautiful to behold; and when the Egyptians see you, they will
say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live.
13 Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and
14 that my life may be spared on your account." When Abram entered
15 Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And when
the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the
16 woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And for her sake he dealt well
with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, he-asses, men-servants, maid-
servants, she-asses, and camels.
17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues be-
18 cause of Sarai, Abram's wife. So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What
is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife?
19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now
20 then, here is your wife, take her, and be gone." And Pharaoh gave men
orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and
all that he had.

ABRAHAM AND LOT[8]—Genesis 13

13:1 (J) So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had,
and Lot with him, into the Negeb.
2,3 Now Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he
journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent
4 had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he
5 had made an altar; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. And
6 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, (P) so that
the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their
7 possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, (J) and there
was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of
Lot's cattle. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in the
land.
8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me,
9 and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we are kinsmen. Is not
the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the
left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then
10 I will go to the left." And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan
valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the
land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar; this was before the LORD destroyed

8. This account provides a striking insight into Abraham's generous nature. The strife among the herdsmen is particularly characteristic of nomadic life where pasture is scarce. Viewed as *tribal* tradition, this story suggests that not long after their arrival in Canaan the Hebrews divided into two groups, the one remaining as nomads in western Palestine, the other settling in the eastern part of the country (and eventually becoming two tribes, Moab and Ammon).

11 Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan valley, and
12 Lot journeyed east; (P) thus they separated from each other. Abram
dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the
13 valley (J) and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom
were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.
14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up
your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and south-
15 ward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see I will
16 give to you and to your descendants for ever. I will make your descendants
as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth,
17 your descendants also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and
18 the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." So Abram moved his
tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron;
and there he built an altar to the LORD.

THE PROMISE OF A SON.[9] ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM—Genesis 18; 19:23-29

18:1 (J) And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at
2 the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and
looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them,
he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth,
3 and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by
4 your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest
5 yourselves under the tree, while I fetch a morsel of bread, that you may
refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come
6 to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham
hastened to the tent to Sarah,[10] and said, "Make ready quickly three
7 measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to
the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant,
8 who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf
which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them un-
der the tree while they ate.
9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in
10 the tent." He said, "I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah
your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door be-
11 hind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had

9. The description of the visit of the three men (angels) to Abraham in the opening part of this section is one of the most vivid and "true to life" pictures of oriental hospitality to be found anywhere.

10. In a passage not reproduced here (*Gen.* 17:15ff.) the name of Abraham's wife is changed from "Sarai" to "Sarah." As in the case of Abraham, however, both forms are variations of the same name.

12 ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I
13 have pleasure?"[11] The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and
14 say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring,
15 and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom; and
17 Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The LORD said, "Shall
18 I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,[12] seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall
19 bless themselves by him? No, for I have chosen[13] him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham
20 what he has promised him." Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry
21 against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know."

22 So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham
23 still stood before the LORD. Then Abraham drew near, and said, "Wilt
24 thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou then destroy the place and not
25 spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do
26 right?" And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city,
27 I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD, I who am but dust and
28 ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Wilt thou destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I
29 find forty-five there." Again he spoke to him, and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."
30 Then he said, "Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty

11. The statement that "Sarah laughed" involves a play upon the name of Isaac, whom she is to bear; the name Isaac is related to the Hebrew word meaning "to laugh." In a version of the same story coming from the P document (found in *Gen.* 17:15-21, but not given here) it is Abraham who laughs.

12. The following account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah seems to have been an attempt to explain the utter desolation which surrounded, and still surrounds, the Dead Sea (or Salt Sea), on the shores of which these cities are supposed to have been located. Such desolation (the result of volcanic action) could be explained by the Hebrews only as the result of divine wrath, which, they deduced, must have been due to the extreme sinfulness of the inhabitants there. Suffering was thought always to be in direct proportion to sin.

13. Or, "known."

31 there." He said, "Behold I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty
32 I will not destroy it." Then he said, "Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He
33 answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.[14]

19:23 The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.
24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire
25 from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.
26 But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.[15]
27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood
28 before the LORD; and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.
29 (P) So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.

ABRAHAM OFFERS ISAAC[16]—Genesis 22:1-19

22:1 (E) After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abra-
2 ham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as
3 a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut wood for the burnt
4 offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On
5 the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. Then

14. In following verses, omitted here, Lot is warned of the impending destruction; with his family he departs from Sodom.

15. The warning which had come to Lot and his family included the command not to look back while they were making their escape. This detail of the story may have been suggested by some pillar of crystalline rocksalt which roughly resembled the human form. Later Jewish writers mention such pillars of salt as existing in their time.

16. This story is usually interpreted as indicating Abraham's loyalty and devotion to the will of his God; when he believed that Jahweh desired the death of his son he did not shrink from the sacrifice even though it meant the death of the one in whom all his hopes rested. From another point of view, however, the account is even more significant for our understanding of early Hebrew religion. There is abundant evidence that in early times child sacrifice was frequently practiced. Gods were thought to desire the sacrifice not only of animals but also of human beings. Excavations have disclosed numerous bones of children who had evidently been sacrificed. Even as late as Micah (c. 725 B.C.) prophets still felt the need to attack such practices (*Micah* 6:7). This story reveals the courage of a man who dared to depart from an accepted custom by substituting an animal for his son when he became convinced that his God did not take delight in the sacrifice of human life.

Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the ass; I and the lad
6 will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." And Abraham took
the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took
in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.
7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here
am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the
8 lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide himself
the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them to-
gether.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built
an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and
10 laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Then Abraham put forth his hand,
11 and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him
from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."
12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for
now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son,
13 your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and
behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and
Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering
14 instead of his son. (R)[17] So Abraham called the name of that place The
LORD will provide;[18] as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it
shall be provided."

15 And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from
16 heaven, and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you
17 have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will in-
deed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven
and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall
18 possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the
nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."
19 (E) So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went to-
gether to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH[19]—Genesis 24:1-38, 49-67

24:1 (J) Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had
2 blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said to his servant, the

17. The letter R stands for Redactor (or Editor). The following verses did not appear in the original source (E), but were inserted by an editor who was working with the source. (This editor was probably responsible for the insertion of "the LORD"—not otherwise found in E here—in verse 11.)

18. "The LORD will provide" is given here as a translation of the place-name, *Jahweh-jireh*.

19. This story is told in a most leisurely manner and possesses a wealth of detail un-

oldest of his house, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand
3 under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of
heaven and of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the
4 daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my
5 country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." The servant
said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this
land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?"
6 Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there.
7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and
from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To
your descendants I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you,
8 and you shall take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not
willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only
9 you must not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under
the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this
matter.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking
all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose, and went to Meso-
11 potamia, to the city of Nahor.[20] And he made the camels kneel down out-
side the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when
12 women go out to draw water. And he said, "O LORD, God of my master
Abraham, grant me success today, I pray thee, and show steadfast love to
13 my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and
14 the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let the
maiden to whom I shall say, 'Pray let down your jar that I may drink,' and
who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one
whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac. By this I shall know
that thou hast shown steadfast love to my master."

15 Before he had done speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to
Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came
16 out with her water jar upon her shoulder. The maiden was very fair to
look upon, a virgin, whom no man had known. She went down to the
17 spring, and filled her jar, and came up. Then the servant ran to meet her,
18 and said, "Pray give me a little water to drink from your jar." She said,
"Drink, my lord"; and she quickly let down her jar upon her hand, and
19 gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I

equaled by any other narrative in *Genesis*. The various incidents which are described provide a strikingly clear picture of numerous aspects of nomadic life in the East. As the story is read it would be well to make a list of the early customs and practices which are thus portrayed. If the narrative is interpreted as *tribal* history, Rebekah's journey into Canaan, with that of her attendants, represents the later migration of related peoples who followed the migration of Abraham; in Canaan these formed some kind of an alliance with the tribe which Abraham led or represents. Observe, throughout the account, the recognition of God's presence and guidance.

20. That is, to Haran.

20 will draw for your camels also, until they have done drinking." So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw,
21 and she drew for all his camels. The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.
22 When the camels had done drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel,[21] and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold
23 shekels, and said, "Tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in
24 your father's house for us to lodge in?" She said to him, "I am the daugh-
25 ter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." She added,
26 "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." The
27 man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD, and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen."
28 Then the maiden ran and told her mother's household about these
29 things. Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran
30 out to the man, to the spring. When he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man; and behold, he was
31 standing by the camels at the spring. He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD; why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a
32 place for the camels." So the man came into the house; and Laban ungirded the camels, and gave him straw and provender for the camels, and
33 water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. Then food was set before him to eat; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He said, "Speak on."
34,35 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great; he has given him flocks and herds,
36 silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, camels and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to
37 him he has given all that he has. My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in
38 whose land I dwell; but you shall go to my father's house and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son. . . .'"[22]
49 "Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."
50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing comes from the LORD;
51 we cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

21. The shekel was a unit of weight. A shekel of gold would be equivalent to about $10.88. The ring mentioned in this verse was probably a nose-ring.

22. In the omitted verses the servant simply recounts what has already been reported in the earlier part of the chapter.

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the
53 earth before the LORD. And the servant brought forth jewelry of silver and
of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave to her
54 brother and to her mother costly ornaments. And he and the men who
were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they
55 arose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master." Her brother
and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us a while, at least ten
56 days; after that she may go." But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since
57 the LORD has prospered my way; let me go that I may go to my master." They
58 said, "We will call the maiden, and ask her." And they called Rebekah,
59 and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." So
they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant
60 and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, be
the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants pos-
61 sess the gate of those who hate them!" Then Rebekah and her maids
arose, and rode upon the camels and followed the man; thus the servant
took Rebekah, and went his way.
62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-la-hai-roi, and was dwelling in the
63 Negeb. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he
64 lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there were camels coming. And
Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the
65 camel, and said to the servant, "Who is the man yonder, walking in the
field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master."[23] So she took her
66 veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things he had
67 done. Then Isaac brought her into the tent, and took Rebekah, and she
became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his
mother's death.

23. Since Isaac is now the "master," it may be implied that Abraham died while the servant was on his journey; perhaps the story as originally told included the report of Abraham's death.

CHAPTER III

THE JACOB STORIES

Jacob and Esau were the sons of Isaac and Rebekah. As the stories in this chapter will show, Jacob was also known as Israel. The latter name was very commonly used. As a matter of fact, the later Hebrews called themselves the "children of Israel." And just as Jacob was also known as Israel, so Esau was also called Edom, which was the name of a tribe to the east of the Dead Sea. Thus the two brothers may be thought of as representing those two groups of people, the Hebrews (Israelites) and the Edomites, and the history of these peoples is reflected in the accounts concerning them.

Jacob does not appear as having the courage nor the adventuresome spirit which characterized Abraham. He is known, instead, for his shrewdness and deceitfulness. While some of his actions may be questioned in the light of present-day moral standards, they were probably viewed in earlier days as notable examples of praiseworthy skill and cleverness. It is to be observed, however, that in one instance, at least, his deceitfulness and dishonesty brought upon him fear and punishment, and he was compelled to flee from his home for safety.

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT[1]—Genesis 25:19-34

25:19 (P) These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was
20 the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took to wife
Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the
21 sister of Laban the Aramean. (J) And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his
wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and Re-
22 bekah his wife conceived. The children struggled together within her;
and she said, "If it is thus, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the
23 LORD. And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other,
the elder shall serve the younger."

1. In this account Esau is represented as the first-born son of Isaac. According to Hebrew custom he should therefore receive a double portion of the inheritance (the "birthright"). By taking advantage of his brother's hunger, however, Jacob secures this for himself. This (like the following narrative) reflects the fact that although the Edomites were established as a nation earlier than were the Israelites, the latter succeeded in becoming the greater of the two. The bitter hostility that existed between these peoples is thus traced to a struggle which really began at the birth of Jacob and Esau.

24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins
25 in her womb. The first came forth red, all his body like a hairy mantle;
26 so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came forth, and his hand had taken hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob.[2] (P) Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

27 (J) When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the
28 field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he ate of his game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and
30 he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red
31 pottage, for I am famished!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.[3]) Ja-
32 cob said, "First sell me your birthright." Esau said, "I am about to die;
33 of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he
34 swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

JACOB OBTAINS THE BLESSING[4]—Genesis 27:1-45

27:1 (J,E)[5] When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son, and said to him, "My son"; and he
2 answered, "Here I am." He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the
3 day of my death. Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your
4 bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me, and prepare for me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat; that I may bless you before I die."

5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when
6 Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebekah said to her
7 son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, 'Bring me game, and prepare for me savory food, that I may eat it, and bless you be-
8 fore the LORD before I die.' Now therefore, my son, obey my word as I

2. That is, "He takes by the heel" or "He supplants."

3. That is, "Red."

4. Here there occurs a second explanation of the way in which Jacob obtained the birthright. The blessing and the birthright were very closely related, for in the giving of the blessing the birthright was granted. When it had been given, regardless of the circumstances, the blessing was regarded as binding. For the significance of this story as tribal history see again Note 1.

5. In this chapter the analysis of sources is uncertain. The material is apparently drawn from both J and E, but the two sources seem to have been so similar at this point that it is extremely difficult to distinguish with certainty the excerpts which come from each of them.

9 command you. Go to the flock, and fetch me two good kids, that I may
10 prepare from them savory food for your father, such as he loves; and
you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he
11 dies." But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau
12 is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me,
and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse upon myself and
13 not a blessing." His mother said to him, "Upon me be your curse, my son;
14 only obey my word, and go, fetch them to me." So he went and took them
and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savory food,
15 such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau
her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob
16 her younger son; and the skins of the kids she put upon his hands and
17 upon the smooth part of his neck; and she gave the savory food and the
bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.
18 So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here
19 I am; who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your
first-born. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game,
20 that you may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have
found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God
21 granted me success." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may
feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not."
22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice
23 is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not
recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's
24 hands; so he blessed him. He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He
25 answered, "I am." Then he said, "Bring it to me, that I may eat of my
son's game and bless you." So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he
26 brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him,
27 "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him; and
he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said,

"See, the smell of my son
is as the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed!
28 May God give you of the dew of heaven,
and of the fatness of the earth,
and plenty of grain and wine.
29 Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be every one who curses you,
and blessed be every one who blesses you!"

30 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely
gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in
31 from his hunting. He also prepared savory food, and brought it to his
father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's
32 game, that you may bless me." His father Isaac said to him, "Who are
33 you?" He answered, "I am your son, your first-born, Esau." Then Isaac
trembled violently, and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and
brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him?
34 —yes, and he shall be blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father,
he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father,
35 "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came
36 with guile, and he has taken away your blessing." Esau said, "Is he not
rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took
away my birthright; and behold, now he has taken away my blessing."[6]
37 Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Isaac answered
Esau, "Behold, I have made him your lord, and all his brothers I have
given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained
38 him. What then can I do for you, my son?" Esau said to his father, "Have
you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father."
And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.
39 Then Isaac his father answered him:

"Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your
dwelling be,
and away from the dew of heaven on high.
40 By your sword you shall live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you break loose
you shall break his yoke from your neck."

41 Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father
had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my
42 father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob." But the words
of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called Jacob
her younger son, and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts
43 himself by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice;
44 arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran, and stay with him awhile, until
45 your brother's fury turns away; until your brother's anger turns away, and
he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and fetch you
from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"

6. Verse 36 was perhaps added by a later editor in an attempt to reconcile this with the previous story.

JACOB'S VISION AT BETHEL[7]—Genesis 27:46 - 28:22

27:46 (P) Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women.[8] If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, "You shall
2 not marry one of the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take as wife from there one of
3 the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. God Almighty[9] bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company
4 of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land of your so-
5 journings which God gave to Abraham!" Thus Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.[10]

6 Now Esau saw that Isaac has blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he
7 charged him, "You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-
8 aram. So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac
9 his father, Esau went to Ishmael and took to wife, besides the wives he had, Maha-lath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son,[11] the sister of Nebaioth.

10,11 (J) Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. (E) And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay
12 down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth,[12] and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the
13 angels of God were ascending and descending on it! (J) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you
14 and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of

7. This has become especially well known as an account which suggests the nearness of God to man. Jacob feels the presence of deity when he least expects it. He receives the assurance of his return to the "promised land" at the very time when he is fleeing beyond its borders. The narrative was probably intended originally to explain and describe the origin of the later famous sanctuary located at Bethel, and also to justify the custom of receiving tithes there by tracing the practice to Jacob himself.

8. In *Genesis* 26:34f. (omitted here), also from P, it was reported that Esau had married two Hittite women who "made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah."

9. The expression of the name in Hebrew is *El Shaddai*.

10. Thus, according to P, Jacob leaves, not because of his fear of Esau, but because of Isaac's wish.

11. Ishmael was the son of Abraham by his slave-wife, Hagar.

12. As will be observed also on other occasions, dreams are especially conspicuous in the E document.

the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all
15 the families of the earth bless themselves. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you."
16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this
17 place; and I did not know it." (E) And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God,[13] and this is the gate of heaven."
18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a sacred pillar and poured oil on the
19 top of it. (J) He called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of
20 the city was Luz at the first. (E) Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give
21 me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's
22 house in peace, then the LORD[14] shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a sacred pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will give the tenth to thee."

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL[15]—Genesis 29:1-30

29:1 (E) Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the
2 people of the east. (J) As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and lo, three flocks of sheep lying beside it; for out of that well the flocks were
3 watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place upon the mouth of the well.
4 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They
5 said, "We are from Haran." He said to them, "Do you know Laban the
6 son of Nahor?"[16] They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming
7 with the sheep!" He said, "Behold, it is still high day, it is not time for the animals to be gathered together; water the sheep, and go, pasture
8 them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

13. The name Bethel, or Beth-el, means literally "house of God."

14. The presence here of the divine name *Jahweh* (rendered "the LORD") in the midst of E material should be ascribed to a later editor.

15. The marriage customs which are portrayed here may well be noted. The account, interpreted as tribal history, may reflect the establishing of a close union between certain related tribes and the tribe of Jacob, which was then wandering in northern Syria as the result of conflict with the Edomites.

16. "Son" here means "descendant"; Laban was the grandson of Nahor.

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's
10 sheep; for she kept them. Now when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of
Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother,
Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered
11 the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and
12 wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and
that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.
13 When Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet
him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house.
14 Jacob told Laban all these things, and Laban said to him, "Surely you are
my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.
15 (E) Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should
you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"
16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the
17 name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was
18 beautiful and lovely. (J) Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, "I will serve
19 you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."[17] Laban said, "It is
better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man;
20 stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to
him but a few days because of the love he had for her.
21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her,
22 for my time is completed." So Laban gathered together all the men of
23 the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah
24 and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (P) (Laban gave his
25 maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) (E) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you
26 deceived me?" (J) Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give
27 the younger before the first-born. (E) Complete the week of this one, and
we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven
28 years." Jacob did so, and completed her week; (P) then Laban gave him
29 his daughter Rachel to wife. (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter
30 Rachel to be her maid.) (E) So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved
Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

JACOB'S COVENANT AT MIZPAH

Genesis 31:1-3,17-55; 32:1-2

31:1 (J) Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's; and from what was our father's he has

17. The seven years of labor were designated as the equivalent of the price to be paid for a wife.

2 gained all this wealth."[18] (E) And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard
3 him with favor as before. (J) Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to
the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."
17,18 (E) So Jacob arose, and set his sons and his wives on camels; and he
drove away all his cattle, (P) all his livestock which he had gained, the
cattle in his possession which he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to
19 the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. (E) Laban had gone to shear his
20 sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods.[19] And Jacob out-
witted Laban the Aramean, in that he did not tell him that he intended
21 to flee. (J) He fled with all that he had, and arose and crossed the Eu-
phrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.
22,23 (E) When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he
took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed
24 close after him into the hill country of Gilead. But God came to Laban
the Aramean in a dream by night, and said to him, "Take heed that you
say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad."
25 And Laban overtook Jacob. (J) Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the
hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen encamped in the hill country
26 of Gilead. (E) And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you
have cheated me, and carried away my daughters like captives of the
27 sword? (J) Why did you flee secretly, and cheat me, and did not tell me,
so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tam-
28 bourine and lyre? (E) And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and
29 my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power
to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying,
30 'Take heed that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' And now you
have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but
31 why did you steal my gods?" Jacob answered Laban, "Because I was
afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by
32 force. Any one with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the
presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it."
Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.
33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the
tent of the two maidservants, but he did not find them. And he went out
34 of Leah's tent, and entered Rachel's. Now Rachel had taken the house-
hold gods and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat upon them. Laban
35 felt all about the tent, but did not find them. And she said to her father,
"Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of
women is upon me." So he searched, but did not find the household gods.
36 (J) Then Jacob became angry, and upbraided Laban; (E) Jacob said to

18. In passages which precede this account (but omitted here) Jacob succeeds in securing for himself a large share of the flocks.

19. The exact significance of these "gods," called *teraphim,* is uncertain.

Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued
37 me? Although you have felt through all my goods, what have you found
of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your
38 kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. (J) These twenty years I
have been with you; your ewes and your she-goats have not miscarried,
39 and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by
wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand
40 you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.[20] Thus I was;
by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled
41 from my eyes. (E) These twenty years I have been in your house; I served
you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock,
42 and you have changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the
God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely
now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction
and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my
daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all
that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters, or
44 to their children whom they have borne? (J) Come now, let us make a
45 covenant, you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me." (E) So
46 Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a sacred pillar. (J) And Jacob said to
his kinsmen, "Gather stones," and they took stones, and made a heap;
47 and they ate there by the heap. (E) Laban called it Jegar-sa-hadutha:[21]
48 but Jacob called it Galeed.[22] (J) Laban said, "This heap is a witness be-
49 tween you and me today." Therefore he named it Galeed, and the pillar
Mizpah,[23] for he said, "The LORD watch between you and me, when we
50 are absent one from the other.[24] If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you
take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, remember,
God is witness between you and me."

51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar, which I have
52 set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a
witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass
53 over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the
God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." (E) So Jacob

20. Shepherds were responsible for sheep that were lost. However, they were not required to make good the loss of animals killed by wild beasts if they could produce the remains of animals thus destroyed. Jacob asserts that he himself had borne the responsibility in any case, thus doing more for Laban than required by law.

21. That is, in the Aramaic language, "the Heap of Witness."

22. That is, in the Hebrew language, "the Heap of Witness."

23. That is, the "Watch Tower" or "Watchpost."

24. This statement is now frequently used as a benediction invoking God's blessing and watchful care over separated friends. As Laban used it, however, it was an expression of distrust and warning; it meant something like this: May Jahweh watch you to see that you do not mistreat my daughters when I am no longer in a position to keep my eye on you.

54 swore by the Fear of his father Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night on the mountain.

55 Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he departed and returned home.

32:1,2 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's army!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.[25]

JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU.[26] HE WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL—Genesis 32:3-32

32:3 (J) And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the
4 land of Seir, the country of Edom, instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with
5 Laban, and stayed until now; and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maidservants; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.' "

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with
7 him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two
8 companies, thinking, "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape."

9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your
10 kindred, and I will do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have
11 become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and slay us
12 all, the mothers with the children. But thou didst say, 'I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

13 (E) So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him
14 a present for his brother Esau, two hundred she-goats and twenty he-
15 goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their
16 colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said

25. That is, "Two Hosts" or "Two Armies."

26. According to the J version Jacob, fearing Esau, seeks security by dividing his possessions. According to E he prepares a gift, both, perhaps, to demonstrate his own prosperity and also to indicate his desire to make right an earlier wrong. (The J and E sources are only roughly distinguished in this section.)

to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and
17 drove." He instructed the foremost, "When Esau my brother meets you,
and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And
18 whose are these before you?' then you shall say, 'They belong to your
servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he
19 is behind us.' " He likewise instructed the second and the third and all
who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you
20 meet him, and you shall say, 'Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.' "
For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me,
21 and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the
present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the
camp.
22 (J) The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and
23 his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. (E) He took them
and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.
24 (J) And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the
25 break of the day.[27] When the man saw that he did not prevail against
Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out
26 of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day
is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."
27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he
28 said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel,[28] for you
29 have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob
asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that
30 you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name
of the place Peni-el,[29] saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet
31 my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limp-
32 ing because of his thigh. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat
the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, because he
touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip.

JACOB MEETS ESAU[30]—Genesis 33

33:1 (J) And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was
coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children

27. In this account of Jacob's wrestling there are offered explanations for the name Israel and for the name of the place Peniel (or Penuel). Originally the opponent was probably described as the spirit of the stream; such spirits were thought to move about only at night so as not to be seen by men. Later writers use this incident to suggest the idea of wrestling with God in prayer. (An attempt is also made in this account to explain a later Hebrew custom; see verse 32.)

28. That is, "God strives," or (as implied in J) "He who strives with God."

29. That is, "The face of God."

30. Esau now appears as a powerful Bedouin chief. He has risen above his resentment; he is forgiving and generous, and conscious of his obligations as a kinsman. Jacob, also powerful, is still clever and shrewd. As the story shows, he takes every precaution to preserve his safety and security.

among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. And he put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all.[31] He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And when Esau raised his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" (E) Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." (J) Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and bowed down; Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down; and last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." Jacob said, "No, I pray you, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand; (E) for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God, with such favor have you received me. Accept, I pray you, my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." (J) Thus he urged him, and he took it.[32]

Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go before you." But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to me; and if they are over-driven for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the cattle which are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the men who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle; therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.[33]

(P) And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram; (E) and he camped before the city. And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a

31. Joseph is Rachel's son. The best-loved members of the family occupy the safest positions.

32. Jacob insists that Esau accept his offering. Such acceptance would indicate that Esau no longer nourished evil designs against him.

33. That is, "Booths." Notice, in verses 12-17, the added precautions which Jacob has taken. He manages to avoid Esau's presence by refusing the latter's escort and by going another way (to Succoth) after he had promised to follow (to Seir). The account of the separation seems to mean that the Edomites settled in the Seir mountain range, in the land later called Edom, while Jacob and his tribe remained in Canaan.

hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his
20 tent. There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.[34]

JACOB'S SONS—Genesis 35:22b-29

35:22b,23 (P) Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. The sons of Leah: Reu-
24 ben (Jacob's first-born), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The
25 sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid:
26 Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher.
These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.[35]
27 And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is,
28 Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac
29 were a hundred and eighty years. And Isaac breathed his last; and he died
and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau
and Jacob buried him.[36]

34. That is, "God, the God of Israel."

35. According to a passage in E (*Genesis* 35:16-18, omitted here) Benjamin was not born in Paddan-aram (when Jacob was there with Laban) but in Canaan.

36. Be prepared to evaluate the life and character of Jacob in the light of the material in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE JOSEPH STORIES

The stories concerning Joseph are among the finest of the Old Testament. They are told with great simplicity and also with remarkable vividness. As we read them the characters seem to be brought to life again and live before our eyes. The dramatic quality is especially noteworthy. We are made to feel very keenly the emotions which the various figures experienced,—the jealousy of Joseph's brothers, the fears of his father and later the fears of the brothers themselves, the affection which they all finally felt for their father, and, in the end, the joy which came to them in their reunion.

Joseph himself, of course, is the central figure. He is described as one who grew and developed. At first he was simply a spoiled boy, shown great partiality by a doting father and given to dreams of his own superiority. The hardships which he was made to endure, however, brought out the better and the really noble qualities of his character. He became a man who was utterly trustworthy and faithful, not only to his masters but also to his own ideals and to his God. As a result of this he arose to a position of extreme power and authority. In addition he appears as a man of great intelligence, foresight, and executive ability, who saved the whole land of Egypt as well as his own family from the ravages of famine. Besides all this he showed himself constantly eager to be of service to those around him and always ready to forgive wrongs committed against him.

The stories seem to be intended not only to reveal the qualities of Joseph's life but also to indicate the way in which God can use loyal followers to fulfill His plans and purposes for His people.

While the narrative cannot be interpreted entirely as tribal history, it does seem to suggest certain tribal movements. Some scholars believe that the tribe of Joseph, perhaps as the result of quarrels with other tribes, migrated into Egypt; possibly some of these other tribes followed at a later date and a reconciliation occurred. It is very possible that the migrations were a part of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, c. 1730 B.C., for although various peoples participated in the invasion, Semites almost certainly were the leaders. Such leaders, closely related to the Hebrews by race, would very probably welcome migrating bands of Hebrews into the land over which they ruled (Egypt). Some such interpretation would explain the presence of Hebrews in Egypt during the time of Moses, whose activity will be described in the following chapter.

Most of the material in this section has been taken from the J and E documents. While the versions in these two sources seem to have followed the same general outlines, certain differences in them can be detected.

JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO EGYPT[1]—Genesis 37

37:1 (P) Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of
2 Canaan. This is the history of the family of Jacob.

1. Following the priestly introduction, we see in this account two versions of the story, the J and the E, woven closely together to form a single continuous narrative. After the story is read as it now stands it should also be read as it appeared in the separate documents, first taking all of the J material by itself, and then all of the E material in the same

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's
3 wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. (J) Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was
4 the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.[2] But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 (E) Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they
6 only hated him the more. He said to them, "Hear this dream which I
7 have dreamed: behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round
8 it, and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over us?"
9 So they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven
10 stars were bowing down to me."[3] But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed
11 come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

12 (J) Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.
13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." (E) And he said to him, "Here
14 I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock; and bring me word again." (J) So he sent him from
15 the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. (E) And a man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, "What are you seeking?"
16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said, "tell me, I pray you, where they
17 are pasturing the flock." And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his
18 brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him afar off, (J) and
19 before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. (E)
20 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his

way. Such a study reveals consistent differences: in J the father is called Israel, while in E he is called Jacob; in J Judah is the brother who is friendly to Joseph, while in E it is Reuben; in J Joseph is sold to the Ishmaelites, while in E he is given over to the Midianites (or is kidnapped by them). Aside from these differences the two versions follow the same general outlines.

2. This was the kind of garment worn by persons who did not engage in hard labor.

3. These suggest his father and mother and eleven brothers, as the next verse indicates.

21 dreams." (J) But when Reuben[4] heard it, he delivered him out of their
22 hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." (E) And Reuben said to them,
"Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no
hand upon him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore
23 him to his father. (J) So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped
24 him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; (E) they took
him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was no water in it.
25 (J) Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of
Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm,
26 and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to
his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his
27 blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be
upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded
28 him. (E) Then Midianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up
and lifted him out of the pit, (J) and sold him to the Ishmaelites for
twenty shekels of silver; (E) and they took Joseph to Egypt.
29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the
30 pit, he rent his clothes and returned to his brothers, and said, "The lad
31 is gone; and I, where shall I go?" Then they took Joseph's robe, and killed
32 a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood; (J) and they sent the long robe
with sleeves and brought it to their father, and said, "This we have
33 found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." And he recognized
it, and said, "It is my son's robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph
34 is without doubt torn to pieces." (E) Then Jacob rent his garments, and
35 put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. (J) All
his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to
be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol[5] to my son, mourn-
36 ing." Thus his father wept for him. (E) Meanwhile the Midianites had
sold him in Egypt to Poti-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the
guard.

JOSEPH AS A SLAVE IN EGYPT[6]—Genesis 39 - 40

39:1 (J) Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Poti-phar, an officer of
Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the
2 Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph,

4. It seems probable that originally in J the name Judah stood here instead of Reuben; the change was made by a later editor.

5. Sheol was thought of as the place where the dead remained in a vague, shadowy sort of existence.

6. This story is intended to reveal the trustworthiness and general strength of character which Joseph possessed. The hardships which he had endured seemed to have developed the nobler aspects of his life. The part of the account which has to do with Poti-phar's wife is similar, in many respects, to an Egyptian tale called "The Two Brothers."

and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master
3 the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that
4 the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. So Joseph found
favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his
5 house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he
made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the LORD blessed
the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was upon
6 all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's
charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food
which he ate.

7 Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. And after a time his
8 master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." But
he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has
no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that
9 he has in my hand; he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has
he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife;
10 how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"[7] And
although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her,
11 to lie with her or to be with her. But one day, when he went into the
house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the
12 house, she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he
13 left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. And
when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out
14 of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them,
"See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me
15 to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; and when he heard
that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and
16 fled and got out of the house." Then she laid up his garment by her
17 until his master came home, and she told him the same story, saying,
"The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me
18 to insult me; but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his
garment with me, and fled out of the house."

19 When his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, "This
20 is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. And Joseph's
master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's
21 prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. But the LORD was
with Joseph and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favor in the
22 sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison com-
mitted to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and
23 whatever was done there, he was the doer of it; the keeper of the prison

7. Since this is from J, one would expect to find "the LORD" (*Jahweh*) here instead of "God." In these words, however, Joseph is speaking to a non-Israelite; hence he used the more general term for deity.

paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

40:1 Some time after this, the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker
2 offended their lord the king of Egypt. (E) And Pharaoh was angry with
3 his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, (J) in the prison where
4 Joseph was confined.[8] (E) The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them; and they continued for some time in
5 custody. And one night they both dreamed—(J) the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—(E) each his own
6 dream, and each dream with its own meaning. When Joseph came to them
7 in the morning and saw them, they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your
8 faces downcast to-day?" They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, I pray you."[9]

9 So the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In
10 my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches; as soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters
11 ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's
12 hand." Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three
13 branches are three days; within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you shall place Pharaoh's cup
14 in his hand as formerly, when you were his butler. But remember me, when it is well with you, and do me the kindness, I pray you, to make
15 mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; (J) and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

16 (E) When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on
17 my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my
18 head." And Joseph answered, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets
19 are three days; within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat the flesh from you."

20 On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of

8. Notice that according to E the events now described occur in the house of the captain of the guard, while according to the J version they take place in the prison (in accordance with the J account in *Genesis* 39).

9. God was thought to speak to people directly through dreams. The ability to interpret dreams was regarded as a divine gift.

the chief baker among his servants. He restored the chief butler to his butlership, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

JOSEPH'S RISE TO POWER[10]—Genesis 41

41:1 (E) After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows sleek and fat, and they fed in the reed grass. And behold, seven other cows, gaunt and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. So in the morning his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none who could interpret it to Pharaoh.

Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh, "I remember my faults today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard; and when we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. And as he interpreted to us, so it came to pass; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, (J) and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. (E) And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; and I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass; and seven other cows came up after them, poor and very gaunt and thin, such as I had

10. In this account there is emphasized not only Joseph's readiness to be of service but also his remarkable organizing and executive ability. These qualities bring their just reward. Famines, such as the one described here, resulted from the failure of the Nile to overflow its banks and thus provide water for irrigation of crops. For this reason the references to the river are significant.

never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the thin and gaunt cows ate up
the first seven fat cows, but when they had eaten them no one would
have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as gaunt as at
the beginning. Then I awoke. I also saw in my dream seven ears grow-
ing on one stalk, full and good; and seven ears, withered, thin, and
blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, and the thin ears swal-
lowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there
was no one who could explain it to me."

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one;[11] God
has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are
seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one.
The seven lean and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years,
and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of
famine. It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown to Pharaoh what he is
about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout
all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of
famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the
famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the
land by reason of that famine which will follow, for it will be very
grievous. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is
fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let
Pharaoh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of
Egypt. (J) Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and
take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven
plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of these good years
that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food
in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the
land against the seven years of famine which are to befall the land of
Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

(E) This proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants.
And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a man as this, in
whom is the Spirit of God?" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has
shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; you
shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as
you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." (J)
And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of
Egypt." (E) Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it
on Joseph's hand,[12] and arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put
a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in his second
chariot; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him
over all the land of Egypt. Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am

11. That is, the two dreams have a single meaning.
12. The ring was the symbol of authority granted to Joseph.

Pharaoh, and without your consent no man shall lift up hand or foot in
45 all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-
paneah,[13] and he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Poti-
phera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.
46 (P) Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh
king of Egypt. (E) And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh,
47 and went through all the land of Egypt. During the seven plenteous
48 years the earth brought forth abundantly, (J) and he gathered up all the
food of the seven years when there was plenty in the land of Egypt, and
stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from
49 the fields around it. (E) And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance,
like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be
measured.
50 Before the year of famine came, Joseph had two sons, whom Asenath,
51 the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the
name of the first-born Manasseh,[14] "For," he said, "God has made me
52 forget all my hardship and all my father's house." The name of the
second he called Ephraim,[15] "For God has made me fruitful in the land
of my affliction."
53 The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to
54 an end; and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had
said. There was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there
55 was bread. When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried
to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to
56 Joseph; what he says to you, do." So when the famine had spread over
all the land, Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold to the Egyptians,
57 for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover, all the earth
came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over
all the earth.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS[16]—Genesis 42 - 45

42:1 (E) When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his
2 sons, "Why do you look at one another?" (J) And he said, "Behold, I
have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us

13. The exact significance of this name is uncertain.

14. This name is explained as meaning "Making to forget," although the true derivation is not definitely known.

15. This name is from a Hebrew word signifying "to be fruitful."

16. The literary beauty of this account should not be overlooked. Observe the vividness of description which makes the characters live. Notice also the way in which the reader is made to feel for himself the varied emotions of the brothers, the father, and Joseph. Here we have one of the literary gems of the Old Testament. In addition, the story reveals some of Joseph's finest qualities.

there, that we may live, and not die." (E) So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, (J) for he feared that harm might befall him. Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

(E) Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. (J) Joseph saw his brothers, and knew them, but he treated them like strangers (E) and spoke roughly to them. (J) "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." (E) Thus Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them; and he said to them, "You are spies, you have come to see the weakness of the land." They said to him, "No, my lord, but to buy food have your servants come. We are all sons of one man, we are honest men, your servants are not spies." He said to them, "No, it is the weakness of the land that you have come to see." And they said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more." But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies. By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain in prison, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." And he put them all together in prison for three days.

On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. Then he turned away from them and wept; and he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.[17] And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with

17. It is not difficult to understand why Simeon (the second-oldest) is held instead of Reuben (the oldest).

grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

26,27 Then they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed. (J) And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender at the lodging-
28 place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack; and he said to his brothers, "My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!" At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, (E) "What is this that God has done to us?"

29 When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they
30 told him all that had befallen them, saying, "The man, the lord of the
31 land, spoke roughly to us, and took us to be spies of the land. But we said
32 to him, 'We are honest men, we are not spies; we are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is this day with our
33 father in the land of Canaan.' Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and
34 go your way. Bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver to you your brother, and you shall trade in the land.' "

35 As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money,
36 they were dismayed.[18] And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more,
37 and now you would take Benjamin; all this has come upon me." Then Reuben said to his father, "Slay my two sons if I do not bring him back
38 to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." (J) But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he only is left. If harm should befall him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

43:1,2 Now the famine was severe in the land. And when they had eaten the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them,
3 "Go again, buy us a little food." But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face, unless your
4 brother is with you.' If you will send our brother with us, we will go down
5 and buy you food; but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is
6 with you.' " Israel said, "Why did you treat me so ill as to tell the man
7 that you had another brother?" They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions; could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring

18. According to the J version the money is found during a stop on the journey (see verse 27); according to E (verse 35) it is discovered after they reach their home.

8 your brother down'?" And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad
with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we
9 and you and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand you
shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before
10 you, then let me bear the blame for ever; for if we had not delayed, we
would now have returned twice."[19]
11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this:
take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry down
to the man a present, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pis-
12 tachio nuts, and almonds. Take double the money with you; carry back
with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks;
13 perhaps it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again
14 to the man; (E) may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, that
he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of
15 my children, I am bereaved." (J) So the men took the present, and they
took double the money with them, and Benjamin; and they arose and
went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.
16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his
house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make
17 ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." The man did as Joseph
18 bade him, and brought the men to Joseph's house. And the men were
afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is
because of the money that was replaced in our sacks the first time, that
we are brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us,
19 to make slaves of us and seize our asses." So they went up to the steward
20 of Joseph's house, and spoke with him at the door of the house, and said,
21 "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food; and when we
came to the lodging-place we opened our sacks, and there was every man's
money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have
22 brought it again with us, and we have brought other money down in
our hand to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."
23 He replied, "Rest assured, do not be afraid; your God and the God of
your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your
24 money." (E) Then he brought Simeon out to them. (J) And when the
man had brought the men into Joseph's house, and given them water,
and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their asses
25 provender, they made ready the present for Joseph's coming at noon,
for they heard that they should eat bread there.
26 When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the
present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the
27 ground. And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father

19. In these verses from J the father is still called Israel and Judah is the prominent brother, while in the passage from E (42:36f., above) the father is called Jacob and the leader among the brothers is Reuben. Compare Note 1.

28 well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads
29 and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom
30 you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to
31 weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served."
32 They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.
33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at one another
34 in amazement.[20] Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

44:1 Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the
2 mouth of his sack, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph
3 told him. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with
4 their asses. When they had gone but a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you
5 stolen my silver cup? Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he divines?[21] You have done wrong in so doing.' "
6,7 When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your
8 servants that they should do such a thing! Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; how then should we steal silver or gold from your lord's
9 house? With whomever of your servants it be found, let him die, and we
10 also will be my lord's slaves." He said, "Let it be as you say: he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be blameless."
11 Then every man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and every man
12 opened his sack. And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending
13 with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and every man loaded his ass, and they returned to the city.

20. They marvelled because Joseph had been able to arrange them in correct order according to their ages.

21. Divining, or foretelling the future, by means of a cup was practiced much as fortunes are now sometimes told with the use of tea-leaves in a cup.

14 When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still
15 there; and they fell before him to the ground. Joseph said to them,
"What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that such a
16 man as I can indeed divine?" And Judah said, "What shall we say to my
lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has
found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves,
17 both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found." But he said,
"Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the
cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your
father."
18 Then Judah went up to him and said,[22] "Oh my lord, let your servant,
I pray you, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn
19 against your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. My lord asked
20 his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' And we said to my
lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a younger brother, the child of
his old age; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's
21 children; and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring
22 him down to me that I may set eyes upon him.' We said to my lord, 'The
lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father
23 would die.' Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother
24 comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' When we went
25 back to your servant my father we told him the words of my lord. And
26 when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' we said, 'We cannot
go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down; for
27 we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' Then
your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two
28 sons; one left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces; and I
29 have never seen him since. If you take this one also from me, and harm
befalls him, you will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to Sheol.'
30 Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is
31 not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the lad's life, when he sees
that the lad is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down
32 the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. For your
servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring
him back to you, then I shall bear the blame in the sight of my father all
33 my life.' Now therefore, let your servant, I pray you, remain instead of
the lad as a slave to my lord; and let the lad go back with his brothers.
34 For how can I go back to my father if the lad is not with me? I fear to see
the evil that would come upon my father."
45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by
him; and he cried, "Make every one go out from me." (E) So no one
2 stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And

22. The plea of Judah, which follows, is one of the high points in the story.

he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of
3 Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my
father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were
dismayed at his presence.
4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they
5 came near. And he said, (J) "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold
into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, be-
6 cause you sold me here; (E) for God sent me before you to preserve life.[23]
For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five
7 years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent
me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive
8 for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and
he has made me a father to Pharaoh,[24] and lord of all his house and ruler
9 over all the land of Egypt. Make haste and go up to my father and say to
him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt;
10 come down to me, do not tarry; (J) you shall dwell in the land of
Goshen,[25] (E) and you shall be near me, you and your children and your
children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have;
11 and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to
come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to pov-
12 erty.' And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see,
13 that it is my mouth that speaks to you. (J) You must tell my father of all
my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring
14 my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck
15 and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. (E) And he kissed all his
brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.
16 When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have
17 come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. And Pharaoh said to
Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back
18 to the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and
come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you
19 shall eat the fat of the land.' Command them also, 'Do this: take wagons
from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring
20 your father, and come. Give no thought to your goods, for the best of all
the land of Egypt is yours.' "
21 The sons of Israel did so;[26] and Joseph gave them wagons, according
to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.

23. All of the events which have occurred are represented as a part of God's plan to save Egypt and Joseph's own family from famine. It was God's method to choose Joseph and to use him as His agent.

24. Joseph is "father to Pharaoh," not literally, but in a figurative sense.

25. Goshen was a district east of the delta of the Nile.

26. Here, and in a few other places, the name Israel (from J) seems to be worked into an E account by the later editors.

22 To each and all of them he gave festal garments; but to Benjamin he
23 gave three hundred shekels of silver and five festal garments. To his
father he sent as follows: ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt,
and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and provisions for his father
24 on the journey. Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed,
25 he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way." So they went up out of
26 Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. And they
told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt."
27 And his heart fainted, for he did not believe them. But when they told
him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he
saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their
28 father Jacob revived; (J) and Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son
is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

JACOB IN EGYPT—Genesis 46:1-7; 47:1-12,27-31

46:1 (J) So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-
2 sheba, (E) and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God
spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he
3 said, "Here am I." Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do
not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great
4 nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up
5 again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." Then Jacob set out
from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their
little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to
6 carry him. (P) They also took their cattle and their goods, which they
had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his
7 offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters,
and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.
47:1 (J) So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, "My father and my brothers,
with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the
2 land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen."[27] And from among
3 his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. Pharaoh
said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pha-
4 raoh, "Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were." They said to Pha-
raoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no pasture for
your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan; and
5 now, we pray you, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." Then
Pharaoh said to Joseph, (P) "Your father and your brothers have come

27. Shepherds were regarded with much disdain by the Egyptians. Since the members of his family were shepherds, Joseph might well have preferred not to acknowledge them as his kinsmen. A further quality of his character is revealed when he not only acknowledges them but even brings them to live near him.

6 to you. The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; (J) let them dwell in the land of Goshen; and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my cattle."

7 (P) Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before
8 Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How
9 many are the days of the years of your life?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of
10 their sojourning." And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the
11 presence of Pharaoh. Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in
12 the land of Rameses,[28] as Pharaoh had commanded. (E) And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents. . . .

27 (J) Thus Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; (P) and they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied ex-
28 ceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred and forty seven years.

29 (J) And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh,[29] and promise to deal loyally and truly
30 with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I
31 will do as you have said." And he said, "Swear to me"; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.[30]

28. This must refer to the land around the city of Rameses (or Raamses). More will be said concerning the place in the next chapter.

29. When a promise was given under oath, as in the following verses, it might be accompanied by this act to make it even more binding.

30. A little later, according to the Biblical account, Jacob recovers sufficient strength to bestow his blessing upon Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. The greater blessing is given to Ephraim even though he is the younger of the two. (As tribal history this suggests that although the tribe of Manasseh was established somewhat earlier than that of Ephraim, the latter became stronger and more prominent.) When Jacob dies Joseph buries him in Canaan, as he had promised to do.

Reviewing the chapter as a whole, be prepared to present a thoughtful character sketch of Joseph, indicating his qualities and accomplishments.

CHAPTER V

MOSES, THE EXODUS, AND LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS

The material in the present chapter is taken largely from the book of *Exodus*, a word which means "going out." It describes the way in which the Hebrews, under the leadership of Moses, escaped from slavery in Egypt (where they had gone during the time of Joseph) and slowly made their way back in the direction of Palestine.

It has been asserted that without Moses there would never have been a Jewish people or the Jewish religion (or the Old Testament or Christianity, both of which grew out of the Jewish religion). In two ways, especially, Moses is extremely important: (1) he established the Hebrews as a distinct people by delivering them from slavery and leading them to a land which, for a time at least, they occupied as their national home; (2) he founded the religion of Israel by uniting his people with Jahweh in a covenant relationship, by giving to the Hebrews many of their basic concepts of deity, and by providing them with at least the foundation of their religious code of laws. The following pages will show how this is true.

Undoubtedly the accounts concerning Moses include certain legendary elements. On the other hand, they may be regarded as far more historical than any of the stories thus far studied, for they stand much closer to the incidents reported than do any of those previously considered. They give us a remarkably clear picture of a most extraordinary man, —a man of keen vision, boundless courage and energy, a strong sense of justice, great organizing ability, extreme self-forgetfulness, endless persistence in the face of tremendous odds, and, above all, a supreme loyalty to his God. It was because Moses possessed these qualities that he accomplished so much.

The date of Moses (and the Exodus) is somewhat uncertain. Since the Biblical account refers to two cities (Pithom and Raamses) which were built by Rameses II, it is thought by many scholars that Rameses II was the pharaoh who oppressed the Hebrews. If this is true, then the Exodus occurred c. 1225 B.C., during the reign of Merenptah, who succeeded Rameses II. On the other hand, the so-called Tell el-Amarna tablets, and other non-Biblical references, indicate that Hebrews (sometimes called "Habiru") were in Palestine throughout the fourteenth century B.C., and the city of Jericho was destroyed c. 1400 B.C. Thus, if *all* Hebrews accompanied Jacob into Egypt (see the last section of the previous chapter), and were again in Palestine by the fourteenth century B.C., they must have left Egypt before that time; this would place the Exodus during the fifteenth century B.C. Numerous scholars accept this earlier date. Others still favor the later date (c. 1225 B.C.), assuming that some Hebrews did not accompany Jacob into Egypt, and that it was the descendants of these Hebrews (and not the returning Hebrews of the Exodus) who were in Palestine during the fourteenth century B.C.

THE BONDAGE IN EGYPT—Exodus 1

1:1 (P) These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with
2 Jacob, each with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

3,4 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.[1]
5 All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in
6 Egypt. (J) Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation.
7 (P) But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly;
they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong; so that the land was filled
with them.
8 (J) Now there arose a new king[2] over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.[3]
9 And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and
10 too mighty for us.[4] Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they
multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against
11 us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them
to afflict them with heavy burdens; and they built for Pharaoh store cities,
12 Pithom and Raamses.[5] But the more they were oppressed, the more they
multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were
13 in dread of the people of Israel. (P) So they made the people of Israel
14 serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar
and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field; in all their work they
made them serve with rigor.
15 (E) Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom
16 was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to
the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, you
17 shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, she shall live." But the midwives
feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but
18 let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives,
and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children
19 live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are
not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and are delivered
20 before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives;
21 (J) and the people multiplied and grew very strong. (E) And because the
22 midwives feared God he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded
all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into
the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."

1. The question as to whether or not *all* of the Hebrew tribes had migrated to Egypt has been discussed in the introduction to this chapter. The P document may over-simplify the situation.

2. As stated in the introduction, this king (or pharaoh) is frequently identified as Rameses II (c. 1300-1225 B.C.).

3. This means that he had had nothing to do with Joseph and hence took no friendly interest in the descendants of Joseph's family. The ruler was now an Egyptian; the Hyksos, supposedly friendly to the Hebrews, had been expelled from Egypt c. 1550 B.C. (See the introduction to Chapter IV.)

4. That is, "too many and too mighty for us" for safety or convenience.

5. Pithom and Raamses have now been identified as places located in the eastern part of the Nile delta. They were built after 1319 B.C., perhaps by Rameses II. Raamses (and Avaris, and Tanis, and Zoan—all of these names being associated with the site) was located at the place where the Hyksos had had their capital.

THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MOSES—Exodus 2:1-22

2:1 (E) Now a man from the house of Levi went and took to wife a daugh-
2 ter of Levi.[6] The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw
3 that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could hide him no longer she took for him a basket made of bulrushes,[7] and daubed it with bitumen and pitch; and she put the child in it and
4 placed it among the reeds at the river's brink. And his sister[8] stood at a
5 distance, to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked beside the river; she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch
6 it. When she opened it she saw the child; and lo, the babe was crying. She
7 took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from
8 the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" And Pharaoh's daughter
9 said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child
10 and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son; and she named him Moses, for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water."[9]

11 (J) One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one
12 of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed
13 the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together; and he said to the man
14 that did the wrong, "Why do you strike your fellow?" He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought,
15 "Surely the thing is known." When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses.

16 But Moses fled from Pharaoh, and stayed in the land of Midian;[10] and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their
17 father's flock. The shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses
18 stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to

6. In other words, both the man and his wife were of the tribe of Levi.
7. The "bulrushes" refer to the papyrus-reed found on the banks of the Nile.
8. A later account suggests that the name of the sister may have been Miriam.
9. Here is another word-play: the name "Moses" is similar in sound to a Hebrew word meaning "to draw out." Actually "Moses" seems to be an Egyptian word; one form of it is found, for example, in the name of the Egyptian pharaoh Thut*-mose*.
10. Midian was located somewhere south or southeast of Palestine.

their father Reuel,[11] he said, "How is it that you have come so soon
19 today?" They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the
20 shepherds, and even drew water for us and watered the flock." He said
to his daughters, "And where is he? Why have you left the man? Call
21 him, that he may eat bread." And Moses was content to dwell with the
22 man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. She bore a son, and he
called his name Gershom; for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a
foreign land."[12]

THE CALL OF MOSES—Exodus 2:23 - 4:20

2:23 (J) In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died.[13] (P) And
the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help,
24 and their cry under bondage came up to God. And God heard their
groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac,
25 and with Jacob. And God saw the people of Israel, and God knew their
condition.

3:1 (E) Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the
priest of Midian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness,
2 and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.[14] (J) And the angel of the
LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he
3 looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.[15] And
Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is
4 not burnt." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, (E) God called
5 to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." (J)
Then he said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for
6 the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (E) And he said,
"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look
at God.[16]

11. According to E, as shall presently be seen, this priest of Midian is named Jethro. Originally he may have been nameless in J. The name Reuel, given to him here, and the name Hobab, given to him in *Judges* 4:11, may have been added later.

12. This is a word-play upon the name "Gershom." Notice, in this whole account, the characteristics of Moses which are revealed.

13. If this king is identified as Rameses II, then his successor was Merenptah (1225-1215 B.C.).

14. This mountain is called Horeb in E and D, but Sinai in J and P. The location is uncertain. Tradition places it in the southern part of the Sinai peninsula; it may, however, have been a part of the Seir mountain range farther east. The mountain was evidently regarded as sacred by the Midianites; hence Moses would have approached it reverently and expectantly.

15. This word-picture suggests to many the blaze of color which sometimes characterizes autumn foliage. More especially it seems to reflect the early idea that deity spoke to men through certain trees.

16. The removing of the shoes and the hiding of the face were acts of reverence. Mohammedans today remove the shoes before entering a place of worship. The hiding of the face also suggests the primitive idea that to look upon God would invite immediate death.

7 (J) Then the LORD said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are
in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know
8 their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand
of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and
broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the
Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and
9 the Jebusites.[17] (E) And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has
come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians
10 oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth
11 my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God,[18]
"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out
12 of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for
you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out
of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain."
13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to
them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me,
14 'What is his name?', what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM
WHO I AM."[19] And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM
15 has sent me to you.' " God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of
Israel, 'The LORD,[20] the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the
God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you;' this is my name
forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.
16 (J) Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The
LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of
Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has
17 been done to you in Egypt; and I promise that I will bring you up out
of the affliction of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the
Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing
18 with milk and honey." ' And they will harken to your voice; and you

17. These are tribes which occupied certain parts of Palestinian territory.

18. Note, in the remaining part of this account, the four difficulties which Moses realizes he may encounter in carrying out the command to lead his people out of Egypt. Observe, also, Jahweh's answer in each case.

19. This is sometimes translated, "I am what I am" or "I will be what I will be." It is understood as the meaning of the name *Jahweh*. Some scholars believe that this name was known to the Hebrews before the time of Moses even though its meaning was first explained at this time. Others believe that it was a Midianite name for deity which Moses learned from Jethro, priest of Midian. In *Exodus* 6:3, from P, Jahweh is represented as saying, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty (*El Shaddai*) but by my name the LORD (*Jahweh*) I did not make myself known to them." The E writer here likewise seems to identify Jahweh with the earlier Hebrew God (verse 13) even though the name *Jahweh* is only now applied to Him. A number of scholars, on the other hand, are of the opinion that actually Jahweh, the God of Moses, was not the *El* of the earlier Hebrews at all; the writers of E and P simply chose to make the identification.

20. Since the name *Jahweh* (reproduced here as "the LORD") has finally been revealed, according to E, it now begins to appear in that document. The author is thus consistent in his use of it.

and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, we pray you, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sac-
19 rifice to the LORD our God.' (E) I know that the king of Egypt will not
20 let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all the wonders which I will do in it; after
21 that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of
22 the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who sojourns in her house, jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; thus you shall despoil the Egyptians."

4:1 (J) Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.' "
2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."
3 And he said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it
4 became a serpent;[21] and Moses fled from it. But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand, and take it by the tail"—so he put out his hand and
5 caught it, and it became a rod in his hand—"that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of
6 Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." Again, the LORD said to him, "Put your hand into your bosom." And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white
7 as snow. Then God said, "Put your hand back into your bosom." So he put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, it
8 was restored like the rest of his flesh. "If they will not believe you," God
9 said, "or heed the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or heed your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it upon the dry ground; and the water which you shall take from the Nile will become blood upon the dry ground."

10 But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of
11 speech and of tongue." Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the
12 LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you
13 what you shall speak." But he said, "Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some
14 other person." Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well; and behold, he is coming to meet you, and when he

21. Such details as this are difficult to explain. Many of the early narratives include miraculous elements, but these need not affect the reliability of the general outlines of the story. In reporting these elements the writers are simply trying to say that Moses was supported in his undertaking by a divine power. (It is claimed even now, incidentally, that "Egyptian conjurers can still render snakes rigid like a rod.")

15 sees you he will be glad in his heart. And you shall speak to him and
put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with
16 his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. He shall speak for you
to the people; and he shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be to him
17 as God. (E) And you shall take in your hand this rod, with which you
shall do the signs."
18 Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me
go back, I pray, to my kinsmen in Egypt and see whether they are still
19 alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." (J) And the LORD said to
Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt; for all the men who were seeking
20 your life are dead." So Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on an
ass, and went back to the land of Egypt; and in his hand Moses took the
rod of God.

MOSES' APPEAL TO PHARAOH—Exodus 5:1 - 6:1

5:1 (E) Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says
the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a
2 feast to me in the wilderness.' " But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that
I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and
3 moreover I will not let Israel go." (J) Then they said, "The God of the
Hebrews has met with us; let us go, we pray, a three days' journey into
the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us
4 with pestilence or with the sword." (E) But the king of Egypt said to
them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their
5 work? Get to your burdens." (J) And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of
6 the land are now many and you make them rest from their burdens!" The
same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their
7 foremen, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as
8 heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves.[22] But the number
of bricks which they made heretofore you shall lay upon them, you shall
by no means lessen it; for they are idle; therefore they cry, 'Let us go and
9 offer sacrifice to our God.' Let heavier work be laid upon the men that
they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words."
10 So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said
11 to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh, 'I will not give you straw. Go your-
selves, get your straw wherever you can find it; but your work will not
12 be lessened in the least.' " So the people were scattered abroad through-
13 out all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters
were urgent, saying, "Complete your work, your daily task, as when
14 there was straw." And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pha-

22. Bricks were made of mud taken from the Nile and dried in the sun. Straw was used in them to hold the mud together.

raoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and were asked, "Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today, as hitherto?"

15 Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh,
16 "Why do you deal thus with your servants? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are
17 beaten; but the fault is in your own people." But he said, "You are idle, you are idle; therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.'
18 Go now, and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver
19 the same number of bricks." The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in evil plight, when they said, "You shall by no means
20 lessen your daily number of bricks." They met Moses and Aaron, who
21 were waiting for them, as they came forth from Pharaoh; and they said to them, "The LORD look upon you and judge, because you have made us offensive in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

22 Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, "O LORD, why hast thou
23 done evil to this people? Why didst thou ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he has done evil to this people, and thou hast not delivered thy people at all."

6:1 But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, yea, with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."[23]

THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. THE EXODUS[24]

Exodus 12:21-39

12:21 (J) Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the

23. In Biblical material which follows, ten plagues (accounts of the first nine omitted here) are reported as having been sent upon the Egyptians because of their refusal to allow the Hebrews to leave. The plagues are: (1) the Nile turns to blood (the water is colored by mud or vegetable matter when the river becomes a flood?); (2) frogs; (3) gnats; (4) flies; (5) a disease among all the animals of the Egyptians; (6) boils; (7) hail; (8) locusts; (9) darkness (caused by a sandstorm?); (10) the death of the first-born (a pestilence bringing death to many children). Such plagues and pestilences still occur. It is not difficult to see how the Hebrews should have regarded these as punishment inflicted upon the Egyptians by Jahweh.

24. The Jews today observe the Feast of the Passover, which occurs at about the time of Easter. The Hebrew observance included the killing and eating of a lamb. This spring festival may have been observed by the Hebrews before the Exodus, but after the deliverance from Egyptian bondage the people began to associate it with that deliverance. In later years they thought of the Passover feast as commemorating the time when death "passed over" the homes of the Israelites and spared their children but struck at the homes of the Egyptians, with the result that the Egyptians allowed the Hebrews to depart. As shall presently be seen, the origin of the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread is also traced to this occasion.

22 passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in
the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood which
is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house
23 until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians;
and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the
LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer[25] to enter
24 your houses to slay you. You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for
25 you and for your sons for ever. And when you come to the land which
the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.
26 And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'
27 you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, for he passed over
the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians
but spared our houses.' " And the people bowed their heads and wor-
shiped.
28 (P) Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had com-
manded Moses and Aaron, so they did.[26]
29 (J) At midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt,
from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of
the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle.
30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the
Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house
31 where one was not dead. And he summoned Moses and Aaron by night,
and said, "Rise up, go forth from among my people, both you and the
32 people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. Take your
flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also!"
33 And the Egyptians were urgent with the people, to send them out of the
34 land in haste; for they said, "We are all dead men."[27] So the people took
their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-bowls being bound up
35 in their mantles on their shoulders.[28] (E) The people of Israel had also
done as Moses told them, for they had asked of the Egyptians jewelry of
36 silver and of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor
in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked.
Thus they despoiled the Egyptians.

25. That is, the destroying angel of Jahweh, referring, perhaps, to the pestilence.

26. According to material (from P) which has been omitted, Jahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron to announce all of this to the children of Israel.

27. The Egyptians seemed to fear some further plague which might destroy them all.

28. This is an attempt to explain the origin of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was closely related to the Feast of the Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread started at the beginning of the barley-harvest and continued for seven days. Unleavened bread was bread which was made without leaven (yeast, sour dough saved from a previous baking). Thus the celebration is explained as commemorating the fact that the Hebrews had to depart from Egypt suddenly, before their bread had been leavened. (Some scholars believe that this feast was actually taken over from the agricultural Canaanites after the Hebrews had finally settled among them in Canaan and were influenced by them. In any case the Hebrews give to the occasion a *meaning* related to their own history.)

37 (P) And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, (J) about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.[29]
38 A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very many cattle, both
39 flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any provisions.

THE DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

Exodus 13:17-22; 14:5-31; 15:20,21

13:17 (E) When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest
18 the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt." But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea.[30] And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for
19 battle. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then
20 you must carry my bones with you from here." (P) And they moved on
21 from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. (J) And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that
22 they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.[31]
14:5 (J) When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled,[32] the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from
6 serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him,
7 (E) and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of
8 Egypt with officers over all of them. (P) And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt[33] and he pursued the people of Israel as they
9 went forth defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses

29. If there were six hundred thousand men alone, the total number, including women and children, would be perhaps two million. Clearly this is an exaggeration.

30. The Hebrew name, *Yam Suph,* really means "Reed Sea" or "Marsh Sea." The location, in the thought of the writer, was probably somewhat north of the present Gulf of Suez.

31. This seems to be a symbol of God's protection and guidance. The suggestion has been made that it refers to the fire and smoke signals carried by leaders of a caravan to show the way for those who have fallen behind. It is more likely related to the idea that Jahweh was associated with storms and with volcanic activity, both of which have certain features somewhat in common. (See Note 49 in this chapter, and also the "Song of Deborah"—especially *Judges* 5:3-5, and footnote—in Chapter VI.)

32. The Egyptians discover that the Hebrews have fled instead of going into the desert only temporarily to hold a feast.

33. That is, Pharaoh was stubborn.

and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-ha-hiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

10 (J) When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in
11 great fear. (E) And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD; (J) and they said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to
12 us, in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been
13 better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you
14 see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and
15 you have only to be still." (P) The LORD said to Moses, (E) "Why do you
16 cry to me? (P) Tell the people of Israel to go forward. (E) Lift up your rod, (P) and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the
17 people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea. And I will harden the heart of the Egyptians, so that they shall go in after them; and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots and his horsemen.
18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

19 (E) Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; (J) and the pillar of cloud moved from before
20 them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night.[34]

21 (P) Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, (J) and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong wind all night, and made the sea dry
22 land, (P) and the waters were divided.[35] And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them
23 on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots,
24 and his horsemen. (J) And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and
25 discomfited the host of the Egyptians, (E) clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily;[36] (J) and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

34. Here the "pillar of cloud" seems clearly to be intended to suggest God's protection (perhaps in the form of a thunder-storm).

35. Notice the difference between the J and the P versions. According to J the waters in the shallow sea are driven back by a strong wind, creating a "low tide,"—a natural occurrence. According to P the division of the waters is due to an act of Moses. The power of the wind in causing tidal waves is, of course, well known.

36. This means that the chariots had difficulty in getting through the mud and sand.

26 (P) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots,
27 and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, (J) and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the LORD routed the Egyptians
28 in the midst of the sea. (P) The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them
29 into the sea; (J) not so much as one of them remained. (P) But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.
30 (J) Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians;
31 and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD; and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.
15:20 (E) Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and
21 dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."[37]

WATER, QUAILS, AND MANNA—Exodus 15:22-16:15; 16:31

15:22 (J) Then Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur; they went three days in the wilderness and
23 found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.[38]
24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"
25 And he cried to the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.[39]

(E) There the LORD made for them a statute and an ordinance and there
26 he proved them, saying, "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD, your healer."
27 (J) Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the water.
16:1 (P) They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of

37. Although these two lines are given in the E source, they may well have come from the time of Moses. In the ancient world victories were often celebrated in this way.

38. That is, "Bitterness."

39. It is said that some tree or shrub in that region contained properties which counteracted the bitter qualities of the water and thus made it suitable for drinking. Springs of bitter water are to be found a few miles southeast of Suez.

Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from
2 the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel
3 murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 (J) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or
5 not. (P) On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it
6 will be twice as much as they gather daily." So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the LORD
7 who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings against
8 the LORD. For what are we, that you murmur against us?" And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your murmurings which you murmur against him—what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the LORD."

9 And Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your murmur-
10 ings.' " And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the
11,12 LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, "I have heard the murmurings of the people of Israel; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' "

13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp;[40] (J) and in the
14 morning dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as
15 hoarfrost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?"[41] For they did not know what it was. (P) And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. . . ."[42]

40. Quails (or partridges), common on the Sinai Peninsula, could easily be killed, for after their flight over the sea they become exhausted and settle or fall upon the ground.

41. These words should perhaps be changed to "It is manna." In any case, that which is described here is later called "manna." The term suggests the Egyptian word *man*, meaning "sap" or "gum." Hence, manna is thought to refer to the juice of the tamarisk tree which forms gum-like white grains on the branches and falls to the ground. It must be gathered in the morning since it melts in the sun.

42. As the account concerning the manna continues in *Exodus* (from P), the people are told to gather only enough for one day (since it would spoil if held over until the second

31 (P) Now the house of Israel called its name manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

MOSES APPOINTS ASSISTANT JUDGES—Exodus 18

18:1 (E) Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the LORD had
2 brought Israel out of Egypt. Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken
3 Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away,[43] and her two sons, of whom the name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a
4 sojourner in a foreign land"), and the name of the other Eliezer[44] (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the
5 sword of Pharaoh"). And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at
6 the mountain of God. And when one told Moses, "Lo, your father-in-law
7 Jethro is coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance and kissed him;
8 and they asked each other of their welfare, and went into the tent. Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon
9 them in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.
10 And Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of
11 the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because he delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians, when they dealt arrogantly with
12 them." And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.[45]
13 On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood
14 about Moses from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are

day). There is one exception allowed, however: they are commanded to gather a double portion on the day before the Sabbath. This seems to be a questionable part of the narrative, for the Hebrews probably did not yet observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. The writers (priests, c. 500 B.C.) simply assume that the Sabbath had always been observed as a holy day.

43. Evidently Moses had sent his wife back to Midian, although the reason is not given. Perhaps in the original E version she had not accompanied him into Egypt, for the statement that he "sent her away" may be a later addition to the text.

44. That is, "My God is a help."

45. Apparently Jethro, priest of Midian, was already a worshiper of Jahweh. At least he here serves the priestly function before Jahweh. This fact supports the idea that Moses may have learned about Jahweh from Jethro. See Note 19.

doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand
15 about you from morning till evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-
16 law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God;[46] when they have
a dispute, they come to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor,
17 and I make them know the statutes of God and his decisions." Moses'
18 father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the
people with you will wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you;
19 you are not able to perform it alone. Listen now to my voice; I will give you
counsel, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God,
20 and bring their cases to God; and you shall teach them the statutes and
the decisions, and make them know the way in which they must walk and
21 what they must do. Moreover choose able men from all the people, such
as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place
such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties,
22 and of tens.[47] And let them judge the people at all times; every great
matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide
themselves; so it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden
23 with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able
to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."
24 So Moses gave heed to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that
25 he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them
heads over the people, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and
26 of tens. And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought
27 to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves. Then Moses
let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own country.[48]

THE HEBREWS AT MOUNT SINAI[49]—Exodus 19

19:1 (P) On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth
out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of

46. The verdicts of Moses (acting as judge) are looked upon as the verdicts of God Himself.

47. These numbers indicate only the approximate sizes of the groups.

48. Note the characteristics of Moses which appear in this section. The emphasis upon his judging and law-giving is in harmony with the later view that he, above all others, was responsible for Hebrew law. Later, of course, the entire code of laws in the Pentateuch came to be known as the Law of Moses. (Note also the further influence of Jethro.)

49. In this section the material from the various sources is difficult to distinguish and has been expanded by the notes of later editors or redactors (R). It has been combined in such a way that it is rather difficult to secure from it a consistent picture of the activity of Moses and his people in their relationship to Jahweh. In E there seems to be suggested the raging of a thunder-storm,—in J some kind of volcanic action. Both sources, however, are attempting to emphasize the fact that at Mount Sinai the presence of Jahweh was strongly felt and the people came into close relationship with Him. It is to be observed that Jahweh is thought of as having His particular dwelling at Mount Sinai. It was here that Moses first felt His presence, and it is here that all of the Hebrews now come into contact with Him.

2 Sinai. And when they set out from Rephidim and came into the wilder-
ness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; (E) and there Israel en-
3 camped before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, (J) and the
LORD called him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the
4 house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: (R) 'You have seen what I
did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought
5 you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my
covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the
6 earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy
nation.'[50] (J) These are the words which you shall speak to the children
of Israel."

7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them
8 all these words which the LORD had commanded him. And all the
people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we
9 will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. And
the LORD said to Moses, "Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that
the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you
for ever."

10 Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. (E) And the
LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and
11 tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, and be ready by the third
day; for on the third day (J) the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai
12 in the sight of all the people.[51] And you shall set bounds for the people
round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain
or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to
13 death;[52] no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether
beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast,
14 they shall come up to the mountain." (E) So Moses went down from the
mountain to the people, and consecrated the people; and they washed
15 their garments. And he said to the people, "Be ready by the third day; do
not go near a woman."

16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings,
and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so
17 that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought
the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the
18 foot of the mountain. (J) And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, be-
cause the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up
19 like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (E) And

50. These last sentences were probably inserted by a later editor, for at the time of the writing of the J document Jahweh was not yet regarded as God of all the earth.

51. To "consecrate" the people means to have them perform certain rites of washing, etc., in preparation for worship.

52. The early idea of "holiness" involved the concept of taboo: it was sacrilegious (and therefore dangerous) to come close to deity except under certain conditions.

as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and
20 God answered him in thunder.[53] (J) And the LORD came down upon
Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to
21 the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the LORD said to
Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the
22 LORD to gaze and many of them perish. (R) And also let the priests who
come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out
23 upon them." And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up
to Mount Sinai; for thou thyself didst charge us, saying, 'Set bounds
24 about the mountain, and consecrate it.' " And the LORD said to him, "Go
down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let the priests
and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out
25 against them." So Moses went down to the people and told them.

THE "E" VERSION OF THE DECALOGUE[54]—Exodus 20:1-21

20:1 (E) And God spoke all these words, saying,
2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.
3 *"You shall have no other gods before me.*[55]
4 *"You shall not make yourself a graven image,* or any likeness of any-
thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is
5 in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve
them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of
the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of
6 those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who
love me and keep my commandments.
7 *"You shall not take the name of the* LORD *your God in vain;*[56] for the
LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
8,9 *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* Six days you shall labor,
10 and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your

53. The thunder is regarded as the "voice" of God.

54. According to the Biblical account as it now stands, Jahweh is represented as giving to the Hebrews numerous laws. The best known of these are the so-called Ten Commandments (that is, the "Decalogue," a term which means literally "Ten Words"). As the material is reproduced here, the parts which are italicized may, for the present, be regarded as these "Ten Words"; the rest is an elaboration upon them. More will be said about this E version of the Decalogue after we have studied some of the other laws which Jahweh is represented as having given at Mount Sinai.

55. Or, "You shall have no other gods besides me." The Hebrews are to worship only the one God, Jahweh, but they undoubtedly assumed that other peoples would worship other gods. This idea has sometimes been called "henotheism" or "monolatry" (as distinguished from absolute monotheism, which recognizes the existence of only one God for *all* peoples).

56. "In vain" means "for an unworthy purpose."

God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner
11 who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.
12 *"Honor your father and your mother,* that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
13 *"You shall not kill.*
14 *"You shall not commit adultery.*
15 *"You shall not steal.*
16 *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
17 *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house;*[57] you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's."
18 Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and the lightenings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the peo-
19 ple were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we
20 die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin."
21 And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick cloud where God was.[58]

RATIFYING THE COVENANT[59]—Exodus 24

24:1 (J) And he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you (R) and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu,[60] (J) and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship
2 (R) afar off. Moses alone shall come near to the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."

57. That is, "household."

58. Verses 18-20 seem to imply that God had not yet spoken. Perhaps these verses belong before verses 1-17. Numerous scholars, on the other hand, believe that verses 1-17 may not have appeared in the original form of the present source (E); in this case there would be no difficulty here.

The Biblical account now continues through several chapters (*Exodus* 20:22 - 23:33, omitted here) which constitute what is called the Book of the Covenant. This Book of the Covenant includes numerous regulations concerning worship, slaves, punishment for wrong-doing, etc. Jahweh is represented as giving all of these laws to Moses.

59. A covenant is an agreement. The Hebrews agree to observe Jahweh's commandments and Jahweh agrees to guide and protect them as their God. The Hebrews thus come into "covenant relationship" with Jahweh. In this section there is described the way in which the Hebrews pledge themselves to keep this covenant. The agreement becomes exceedingly important in this people's later religious thought, and it is mentioned again and again by Old Testament writers.

60. Nadab and Abihu are elsewhere mentioned as sons of Aaron.

3 (E) Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all
the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All
4 the words which the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote all
the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an al-
tar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve
5 tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered
6 burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And
Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he
7 threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant,[61] and read
it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has
8 spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood
and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the cove-
nant which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these
words."[62]

9 (J) Then Moses (R) and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, (J) and seventy of
10 the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel; and there
was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very
11 heaven for clearness.[63] And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of
the people of Israel;[64] they beheld God, and ate and drank.

12 (E) The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and
wait there; and I will give you the tables of stone,[65] with the law and the
13 commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses
rose with his servant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of
14 God. And he said to the elders, "Tarry here for us, until we come to you
again; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a cause,
let him go to them."

15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, (P) and the cloud covered the
16 mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud
covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the
17 midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like
a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of
18 Israel. And Moses entered the cloud, (E) and went up on the mountain.
And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

61. It is from these words that the Book of the Covenant (see Note 58) derives its name.

62. Verses 6-8 suggest an ancient practice. When individuals agreed to form a close relationship, and pledged themselves to protect each other, they sometimes drank some of their mingled blood, thus forming a "blood relationship." Notice, in this account, that part of the sacrificial blood is sprinkled upon the altar of Jahweh and part upon the people. This signifies that a sort of blood relationship has now been established between Jahweh and the Hebrews.

63. This description suggests the appearance of the clear blue (sapphire) sky after the storm.

64. Under ordinary conditions it would have been regarded as fatal to look upon God or even to come so near to a place as sacred as Mount Sinai was thought to be.

65. These tables (tablets) are usually thought of as the two which bore the Ten Words (or Ten Commandments).

32:1 (E) When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what
2 has become of him." And Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and
3 bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold which
4 were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up
5 out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast
6 to the LORD." And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down; for your people, whom you
8 brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you
9 up out of the land of Egypt!' " And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen
10 this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation."

11 But Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does thy wrath burn hot against thy people, whom thou hast brought forth out
12 of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from they fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy
13 people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thine own self, and didst say to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.' "
14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people.

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mountain with the two tables of the testimony in his hands, tables that were written on both
16 sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven
17 upon the tables. When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they
18 shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." But he said, "It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry

19 of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear." And as soon as he came
near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned
hot, and he threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the
20 foot of the mountain.[66] And he took the calf which they had made, and
burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the
water, and made the people of Israel drink it.
21 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you
22 have brought a great sin upon them?" And Aaron said, "Let not the
anger of my lord burn hot; you know the people, that they are set on
23 evil. For they said to me, 'Make us gods, who shall go before us; as for
this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do
24 not know what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Let any who
have gold take it off'; so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire,
and there came out this calf."[67]
25 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (R) (for Aaron
26 had let them break loose, to their shame among their enemies), (E) then
Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the LORD's
side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves to-
27 gether to him. And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel,
'Put every man his sword on his side, and go to and fro from gate to gate
throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his
28 companion, and every man his neighbor.' " And the sons of Levi did ac-
cording to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about
29 three thousand men. And Moses said, "Today you have ordained your-
selves for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of
his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day."[68]
30 On the morrow Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great
sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for
31 your sin."[69] So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people
32 have sinned a great sin; they have made for themselves gods of gold. But
now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out

66. In the following section (from *Exodus* 34) it is suggested that the tablets are replaced.

67. Aaron makes it appear that he himself had very little to do with the making of the calf. The account thus seems to minimize the part which he played.

68. The Levites (supposedly the descendants of Levi) constituted in later times a class of priests among the Hebrews. (The book of *Leviticus* is part of the priests' code of laws.) The Levitical priesthood is represented as having been established here as a reward for loyalty to Jahweh.

69. It appears in this verse that Jahweh might yet inflict punishment. This seems to contradict verse 14. In all probability these two passages come from different sources, but it is difficult to distinguish them. (The material is all assigned to E only because other sources cannot be recognized with any degree of certainty.)

Moses' plea in verses 31 and 32 shows his unselfish devotion to his people: he offers to bear all of the punishment alone if only the people may be spared. Notice how the phrasing of his words betrays his deep emotion.

of thy book which thou hast written." But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. But now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you.[70] Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them."

And the LORD sent a plague upon the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made.

THE "J" VERSION OF THE DECALOGUE[71]—Exodus 34:10-28

(J) And he said, "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with you.

"Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a snare in the midst of you. You shall tear down their altars, and break their sacred pillars, and cut down their Asherim[72] (for *you shall worship no other god,* for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods and make your sons play the harlot after their gods.

"You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

"The feast of unleavened bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib;[73] for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt. *All that opens the womb is mine,*[74] all your male cattle, the firstlings of cow and sheep. The firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb,[75] or if you

70. It is not Jahweh, but his angel, that shall accompany them into Canaan, for Jahweh remains at his dwelling place, Mount Sinai. See Note 49.

71. When the later editor was combining the material from the various sources, he found that he had *two* versions of a Decalogue,—the one in E (already given) and the one in J (reproduced here). Instead of including the J Decalogue as a version *parallel* to that of E, he chose to regard it as one which Jahweh gave to Moses to *replace* the one appearing on the tablets which had been destroyed. As this account now stands, therefore, Jahweh seems to be giving to Moses a *second* Decalogue. (The chief points are italicized.)

72. The Asherah (plural, Asherim) was some kind of sacred pole or post that stood beside the altar.

73. This was the first month; it was later called Nisan.

74. That is, all the first-born.

75. This means that a lamb should be substituted. The ass was regarded as unclean for sacrifice.

will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the first-born of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

21 *"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest;* in plow-
22 ing time and in harvest you shall rest. *And you shall observe the feast of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the*
23 *year's end.*[76] *Three times in the year shall all your males appear before*
24 *the* LORD *God,* the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before you, and enlarge your borders; neither shall any man desire your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.[77]

25 *"You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall*
26 *the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left until the morning. The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the*
27 LORD *your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."* And the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words; in accordance with these words
28 I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.[78]

SPIES ARE SENT INTO CANAAN—Numbers 13:1-3,17-33

13:1,2 (P) The LORD said to Moses, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel; from each tribe of their
3 fathers shall you send a man, every one a leader among them." So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel. . . .[79]

76. These feasts celebrated the wheat harvest and the gathering of grapes.

77. This means that there need be no fear of enemy attacks when the men leave home to attend the feasts.

78. The Ten Commandments appearing in this version should be compared with the more familiar (E) Decalogue previously studied. It will be observed that on the whole these are concerned more with ceremonies and ritual observances than with moral conduct.

It is impossible to determine how many laws Moses actually gave to the Hebrews. The J Decalogue and much of the Book of the Covenant seem to have originated in an agricultural community, since they presuppose a settled agricultural life. For this reason many scholars agree that they could not have been written until the Hebrews became established in Canaan. Concerning the E Decalogue there is much difference of opinion. Some scholars believe that these laws, like those of the J Decalogue, could not have come from Moses. Others are convinced that although in their present form they cannot be ascribed to Moses, yet the basic ideas must be traced to him. It is true, in any case, that the final editors of the Pentateuch did ascribe to Moses many laws which were written later, including those of P (written c. 500 B.C.). These editors knew that Moses had given the Hebrews some of their earliest laws (see Note 48), and they thought of him as the great law-giver; hence it was a simple matter for them to attribute to him the entire Law of the Pentateuch.

79. The omitted verses give the names of those who are sent. The most prominent seem to be Caleb and Joshua.

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, (J) and said to them,
18 "Go up into the Negeb yonder, (E) and go up into the hill country, and
see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong
19 or weak, whether they are few or many, (J) and whether the land that
they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are
20 camps or strongholds, (E) and whether the land is rich or poor, and
whether there is wood in it or not. Be of good courage, and bring some
of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe
grapes.
21 (P) So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin
22 to Rehob, near the entrance to Hamath. (J) They went up into the
Negeb, and came to Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the de-
scendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before
23 Zoan in Egypt.) (E) And they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and cut down
from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on
a pole between two of them; they brought also some pomegranates and
24 figs. That place was called the Valley of Eshcol,[80] because of the cluster
which the men of Israel cut down from there.
25 (P) At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land.
26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the
people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, (E) at Kadesh;[81] they brought
back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit
27 of the land. (J) And they told him, "We came to the land to which you
28 sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Yet the people
who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very
29 large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites
dwell in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the
Amorites dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea,
and along the Jordan."
30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up
31 at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it." Then the
men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against
32 the people; for they are stronger than we." (P) So they brought to the
people of Israel an evil report of the land which they had spied out, say-
ing, "The land, through which we have gone, to spy it out, is a land that
devours its inhabitants;[82] (E) and all the people that we saw in it are men
33 of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim[83] (the sons of Anak, who

80. That is, "A Cluster."

81. Kadesh, where the Hebrews tarried, was located just south of Canaan. From here the Hebrews hoped to go directly north.

82. This means it "is a land which starves its inhabitants to death."

83. See Note 14, Chapter I.

come from the Nephilim); and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."[84]

THE DEATH OF MOSES—Deuteronomy 34[85]

34:1 (JEDP)[86] And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount
Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho.[87] And the LORD
2 showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of
Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,[88]
3 the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the valley of Jericho the city of palm-
4 trees, as far as Zoar. And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which
I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your de-
scendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over
5 there." So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab,
6 according to the word of the LORD, and he buried him in the valley in
the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows the place of his
7 burial to this day.[89] Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he
8 died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the people
of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days
of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.
9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses
had laid his hands upon him; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and
10 did as the LORD had commanded Moses. And there has not arisen a
11 prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, none
like him for all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to

84. The following chapter in *Numbers* (omitted here) attempts to explain the reason why the Hebrews were compelled to continue to wander for such a long time (40 years) in the wilderness. The writers regard the Wandering as punishment for the people's lack of faith: if they had had confidence or faith in Jahweh's support they would have entered Canaan immediately, as Caleb advised. This they did not do. It is true that no other opportunity for entering appeared until after most of the older persons had died. Thus the Hebrews are compelled to make the long journey around the southern end of the Dead Sea.

85. *Deuteronomy* is the last book of the Pentateuch. See the introduction to Chapter I.

86. Although most of *Deuteronomy* was written as a separate document (D), appearing in 621 B.C., later editors have included here excerpts from other sources as well.

87. "Nebo" and "Pisgah" seem to refer to the same mountain, although it has been suggested that one name may have applied to a mountain range, the other to a particular mountain peak. The location was just east of the northern end of the Dead Sea.

88. That is, the Mediterranean Sea.

89. These words indicate that this chapter of *Deuteronomy* was written long after the death of Moses.

do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his
12 land, and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds
which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.[90]

90. Verses 10-12 show how highly later Hebrews and Jews regarded Moses and his work. He not only delivered his people from Egyptian slavery and established them as a distinct group, but he also gave to them a religious faith which survived through many difficulties and dangers. The Biblical writers make it clear that he was able to accomplish all of this because of his utter loyalty and devotion to his God. "There was at work in Moses something more than Moses, something transcending man" (James, *Personalities of the Old Testament*). Be prepared to discuss fully the qualities of his personality and his achievements.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN—THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

In this chapter there is described the way in which the Hebrews finally succeeded in entering Canaan and establishing themselves in that land. Actually there are two somewhat different reports. According to the book of *Joshua* (named for its chief character, the man who became the leader after the death of Moses) the conquest of Canaan was accomplished in a very short time. According to the book of *Judges,* on the other hand, many years elapsed before the Hebrews completely dominated the country; during all of this time they found it necessary to carry on warfare with first one and then another of the peoples who were already in that area. The latter report is generally regarded as by far the more accurate.

While the Hebrews were engaged in this undertaking they were not highly organized, but lived for the most part as scattered tribes. When particular dangers arose they united temporarily under the direction of some local leader or "judge." The Hebrew word which is usually translated as "judge" has a double connotation as it is used here: on the one hand it suggests the idea of a *deliverer* of the people from their enemies; on the other hand it refers to one who then acted as *ruler* (without establishing a dynasty, however). (It is to be noted that the term is not employed, as in contemporary usage, to refer to one who dispenses justice in a court.) These judges, therefore, governed temporarily, assuming leadership as dangers arose and delivering their people from particular crises. Altogether there seem to have been twelve or thirteen judges, although the exploits of only a few of them will be considered here. The period of the judges ends when a monarchy is established with Saul as the first king (shortly before 1025 B.C.).

During this time the religion of the Hebrews declined. This was due partly to frequent warfare and partly to the absence of leaders who were strongly religious. Furthermore, the Hebrews increasingly were influenced by the religious ideas and practices of the other peoples, especially the Canaanites, who occupied that territory. Many turned to the worship of this or that baal (the local "lord" or god of the Canaanites); others, continuing the worship of Jahweh in name, began to carry on that worship in the same way in which baal-worship was conducted. These developments occurred especially as the Hebrews turned more and more to agriculture, for the local baalim (the plural for baal) were regarded by the Canaanites as responsible for the fertility of the districts in which they were worshiped. Altogether there was a very real threat to the distinctive elements found in the earlier Hebrew religion.

In the book of *Joshua* there appear the same sources which have previously been distinguished. The material from these sources has been supplemented, however, by a writer whose style and point of view resemble those of the D document. His additions are indicated by the use of the letter R. (It should be remembered that this R does not stand for the final redactor or editor of the Pentateuch, but for the writer who shows the influence of D and who wrote not long after D appeared, perhaps c. 550 B.C.)

The sources found in the book of *Judges* are designated as J and E. This does not necessarily mean that the writers of these sources were the same as the writers of the J and E of the Pentateuch, although certain resemblances may be noted, and some scholars regard them as identical (see the introduction to Chapter I). In addition to these sources there appears the work of a writer whose contribution is similar to that which is designated as R in *Joshua.*

JOSHUA[1]—Joshua 1:1-9; 6; 11:23

1:1 (R) After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said
2 to Joshua the son of Nun, Mòses' minister, "Moses my servant is dead;
now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the
3 land which I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that
the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised
4 to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon[2] as far as the great river,
the river Eu-phrates, all the land of the Hittites[3] to the Great Sea toward
5 the going down of the sun[4] shall be your territory. No man shall be able
to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I
6 will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and of
good courage; for you shall cause this people to inherit the land which I
7 swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous,
being careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant
commanded you; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that
8 you may have good success wherever you go. This book of the law shall
not depart out of your mouth,[5] but you shall meditate on it day and night,
that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for
then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good
9 success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be
not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the LORD your God is with you
wherever you go."

6:1 (E)[6] Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without because
2 of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the LORD
said to Joshua, "See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king
3 and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all the men of
4 war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. And seven
priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark;[7] and on

1. This section includes material which shows that Joshua succeeded Moses as leader of the Hebrews. Under his direction an entrance is made into Canaan when the city of Jericho is captured and destroyed.

2. The Lebanon mountain range is represented as lying upon the northern border of Palestine.

3. The inhabitants of Canaan are thus designated here.

4. This refers to the Mediterranean Sea.

5. The writer here is referring to *Deuteronomy* in the form (D) in which it appeared in 621 B.C. This document, as suggested in the introduction to the present chapter, has influenced him greatly.

6. Most of the following account comes from E, although a few parts may be derived from a different source.

7. The Ark was a sacred chest which represented the presence of Jahweh. It was carried into battle in order that Jahweh might be present with His people to help them. It was sometimes called the "ark of the covenant," and later it was supposed that the two tablets bearing the Decalogue, the basis of the covenant, were contained within it.

the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests
5 blowing the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's
horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people
shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat,
6 and the people shall go up every man straight before him." So Joshua
the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of
the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns
7 before the ark of the LORD." And he said to the people, "Go forward;
march around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the ark
of the LORD."

8 And as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing
the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing
the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them.
9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and
the rearguard came after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually.
10 But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or let your voice
be heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I
11 bid you shout; then you shall shout." So he caused the ark of the LORD
to compass the city, going about it once; and they came into the camp,
and spent the night in the camp.

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark
13 of the LORD. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams'
horns before the ark of the LORD went on, blowing the trumpets con-
tinually; and the armed men passed before them, and the rearguard came
14 after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. And the
second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the
camp. So they did for six days.

15 On the seventh day they rose early at the dawn of day, and marched
around the city in the same manner seven times: it was only on that day
16 that they marched around the city seven times. And at the seventh time,
when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people,
17 "Shout; for the LORD has given you the city. And the city and all that
is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction;[8] only Rahab the
harlot and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid
18 the messengers that we sent.[9] But you, keep yourselves from the things
devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any
of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction,
19 and bring trouble upon it. But all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze

8. To "devote" something to Jahweh meant to offer it to Him. Since all the enemies of the Hebrews were thought to be Jahweh's enemies also, it was supposed that He would desire their complete destruction as a sort of sacrifice. Other primitive peoples held similar ideas.

9. The family of Rahab is spared because she had concealed (and thus protected) certain Hebrews who had been sent to Jericho as spies.

and iron, are sacred to the LORD;[10] they shall go into the treasury of the
20 LORD." So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon
as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a great
shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the
21 city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Then they
utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old,
oxen, sheep, and asses, with the edge of the sword.
22 And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into
the harlot's house, and bring out from it the woman, and all who belong
23 to her, as you swore to her."[11] So the young men who had been spies went
in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and
all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them
24 outside the camp of Israel. And they burned the city with fire, and all
within it; only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron,
25 they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. But Rahab the
harlot, and her father's household, and all who belonged to her, Joshua
saved alive; and she dwelt in Israel to this day, because she hid the mes-
sengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.
26 Joshua laid an oath upon them at that time, saying, "Cursed before
the LORD be the man that rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

At the cost of his first-born shall he lay its foundation,
And at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates."

27 (R) So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.[12]

11:23 (R) So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD
had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel
according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.[13]

10. These treasures were "sacred to the LORD" in the sense that they were His exclusive possession. Thus everything is to be destroyed except what is to be reserved for deity.

11. The spies had promised Rahab that she and her family should be spared as a reward for her help.

12. Of course the writers of this account describe the fall of Jericho as an act of God. That the city was destroyed cannot be doubted, for archaeological excavations show that some catastrophe occurred there at an early date. It appears that the walls crumbled as the result of an earthquake, a not uncommon happening in that vicinity. Whether or not this took place at the very time when the Hebrews made their attack cannot be determined. In any case, Jericho was left comparatively unprotected, and the Hebrews had little difficulty in entering and burning the city. The ruins which have been discovered indicate that Jericho was a town of from 1000 to 1500 inhabitants and occupied some six acres of territory.

The following chapters in the book of *Joshua* (omitted here) describe the conquest of other parts of Canaan.

13. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the book of *Joshua* thus reports that the Hebrews gained complete control of Canaan in a very short time,—within the period of Joshua's activity. The following sections indicate, however, that numerous other inhabitants were yet to be overcome and subdued. At least some 200 years elapsed before all of this was accomplished.

DEBORAH[14]—Judges 4 - 5

4:1 (R) And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of
2 the LORD, after Ehud died.[15] And the LORD sold them into the hand of
Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his
3 army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the people of
Israel cried to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of
iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.[16]
4 (J) Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging
5 Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between
Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of
6 Israel came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak the son
of Abino-am[17] from Kadesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Does not the
LORD, the God of Israel, command you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount
Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of
7 Zebulun?[18] And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to
meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will
8 give him into your hand.' " Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I
9 will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go." And she said, "I
will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going
will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of
10 a woman." Then Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kadesh. And
Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kadesh; and ten thousand
men went up at his heels; and Deborah went up with him.
11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants

14. After their entrance into Canaan the Hebrews were comparatively well established in the highlands; but in the plains there were strong Canaanite cities, whose inhabitants not only resisted the Hebrews but also took the aggressive against them. Under the leadership of Deborah the Canaanite domination was finally brought to an end when a decisive battle was fought on the Plain of Esdraelon. The Hebrew victory is described both in prose (*Judges* 4) and in poetry (the famous "Song of Deborah," *Judges* 5).

15. This introduction suggests the point of view of the editor (R) as seen throughout the book of *Judges*. It reflects his understanding of God's ways with men: sin and disaster —loyalty (or obedience) and prosperity—go together. When suffering occurs, it is God's punishment for sin; as the sin is eliminated God's favor is restored. Thus, in *Judges,* this scheme is found: Israel sins (is disloyal to Jahweh, turning to Baal) and oppression follows; a judge arises, who restores the people's loyalty, and the oppression is overcome; then the cycle is repeated during the period of another judge. (Ehud was one of the judges.)

16. Here the oppression by Jabin, a Canaanite king, is regarded as punishment for Israel's sin,—the sin of worshiping the local baalim (plural of baal). It is true that in turning to the local baalim the Hebrews would lose much of their unity and hence much of their strength.

17. Barak appears to have been the "judge," as the term is usually employed for this period. Deborah seems to have been a "judge" in the sense in which the word is understood today (see verse 5).

18. Naphtali and Zebulun were two of the Hebrew tribes. See the list of Jacob's sons in the last section of Chapter III.

of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses,[19] and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kadesh.

12 When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abino-am had gone up to
13 Mount Tabor, Sisera called out all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Harosheth-ha-goiim to
14 the river Kishon. And Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the LORD go out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand
15 men following him. And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak at the edge of the sword; and Sisera alighted
16 from his chariot and fled away on foot. And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-ha-goiim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.

17 But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the
18 house of Heber the Kenite.[20] And Jael came out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear." So he
19 turned aside to her in the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said to her, "Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty." So she
20 opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and asks
21 you, 'Is any one here?' say 'No.' " But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground, as he
22 was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael went out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." So he went in to her tent; and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

23 (R) So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the
24 people of Israel. And the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song of Deborah[21]

5:1 (J) Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abino-am on that day:
2 "That the leaders took the lead in Israel,
that the people offered themselves willingly,
bless the LORD!

19. See Note 11, Chapter V.

20. Verse 11 (which see) was inserted to introduce Heber and his family.

21. This song has been said to belong to the "finest odes in the literature of the world." Although it was included in J it was composed immediately after the victory which it celebrates and hence is one of the earliest known examples of Hebrew writing (twelfth century B.C.). Because of its antiquity it is an exceedingly important source of information regarding ancient Hebrew history.

3 "Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes;
to the LORD I will sing,
I will make melody to the LORD, the God of Israel.

4 "LORD, when thou didst go forth from Seir,[22]
when thou didst march from the region of Edom,
the earth trembled,
and the heavens dropped,
yea, the clouds dropped water.
5 The mountains quaked before the LORD,
yon Sinai before the LORD, the God of Israel.

6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, caravans ceased
and travelers kept to the byways.[23]
7 The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased
until you arose, Deborah,
arose as a mother in Israel.
8 When new gods were chosen,[24]
then war was in the gates.
Was shield or spear to be seen
among forty thousand in Israel?
9 My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel
who offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless the LORD.

10 "Tell of it, you who ride on tawny asses,
you who sit on rich carpets
and you who walk by the way.
11 To the sound of musicians at the watering places,
there they repeat the triumphs of the LORD,
the triumphs of his peasantry in Israel.

"Then down to the gates marched the people of the LORD.

12 "Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, utter a song!

22. Verses 4 and 5 state that Jahweh, in a thunderstorm, marches to the aid of the Hebrews from His dwelling place at Mount Sinai. Note that Jahweh is still thought to have His home at Sinai, that He again appears as one who acts through the thunderstorm (see *Exodus* 19: 16-19 and Notes 49 and 53 in Chapter V), and that Sinai seems to be located in the Seir mountain range and not in the Sinai Peninsula (see Note 14 in Chapter V).

23. This suggests that the regular highways were unsafe.

24. See Notes 15 and 16.

Arise, Barak, lead away your captives,
O son of Abino-am.
13 Then down marched the remnant of the noble;
the people of the LORD marched down for him against the mighty.[25]
14 From Ephraim they set out thither into the valley,
following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen;
from Machir marched down the commanders,[26]
and from Zebulun those who bear the marshal's staff;[27]
15 the princes of Issachar came with Deborah,
and Issachar faithful to Barak;
into the valley they rushed forth at his heels.
Among the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.[28]
16 Why did you tarry among the sheepfolds,
to hear the piping for the flocks?
Among the clans of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.
17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan;[29]
and Dan, why did he abide with the ships?
Asher sat still at the coast of the sea,
settling down by his landings.
18 Zebulun is a people that jeopardized their lives to the death;
Naphtali too, on the heights of the field.

19 "The kings came, they fought;
then fought the kings of Canaan,
at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;[30]
they got no spoils of silver.[31]
20 From heaven fought the stars,
from their courses they fought against Sisera.[32]
21 The torrent Kishon swept them away,
the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon.
March on, my soul, with might!

25. The following verses (14-18) tell of the tribes which came to the support of the Hebrews and also of those which did not.
26. Machir was a branch of the tribe of Manasseh.
27. The staff was a sign of authority.
28. This line has sometimes been translated, "There were divisions and debates."
29. Gilead was a branch of the tribe of Manasseh.
30. Taanach and Megiddo were towns in the southern part of the Plain of Esdraelon.
31. They gained no spoils or booty because they lost the battle.
32. This verse reflects the early idea that stars possessed personalities. They are said to have sent a thunderstorm which caused the river Kishon to overflow. (Note the following verses and compare with verses 4 and 5 above.) In the flood thus created the chariots of the Canaanites were swept away.

22 "Then loud beat the horses' hoofs
with the galloping, galloping of his steeds.

23 "Curse Meroz, says the angel of the LORD,
curse bitterly its inhabitants,
because they came not to the help of the LORD,
to the help of the LORD against the mighty.[33]

24 "Most blessed of women be Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite,
of tent-dwelling women most blessed.
25 He asked water and she gave him milk,[34]
she brought him curds in a lordly bowl.
26 She put her hand to the tent peg
and her right hand to the workmen's mallet;
she struck Sisera a blow,
she crushed his head,
she shattered and pierced his temple.
27 He sank, he fell,
he lay still at her feet;
at her feet he sank, he fell;
where he sank, there he fell dead.

28 "Out of the window she peered,
the mother of Sisera gazed through the lattice:[35]
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?'
29 Her wisest ladies make answer,
nay, she gives answer to herself,
30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?—
A maiden or two for every man;
spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil?'

31 "So perish all thine enemies, O LORD!
But thy friends be like the sun as he rises in his might."[36]

(R) And the land had rest for forty years.

33. This verse pronounces another curse upon those who refused to help.
34. The reference here, of course, is to Sisera.
35. The scene now shifts to Sisera's home, where his mother tries to account for his delay in returning from the battle.
36. Verse 31 obviously represents the poet's own attitude.

GIDEON[37]—Judges 6:1—7:21

6:1 (R) The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD;
2 and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.[38] (J)[39] And
the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel; and because of Midian the
people of Israel made for themselves the dens which are in the mountains,
3 and the caves and the strongholds. For whenever the Israelites put in
seed the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would
4 come up and attack them; they would encamp against them and destroy
the produce of the land, as far as the neighborhood of Gaza, and leave no
5 sustenance in Israel, and no sheep or ox or ass. For they would come up
with their cattle and their tents, coming like locusts for number; both
they and their camels could not be counted; so that they wasted the land
6 as they came in. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and
the people of Israel cried for help to the LORD.

7 When the people of Israel cried to the LORD on account of the Midian-
8 ites, the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel; and he said to them,
"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt, and
9 brought you out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you from the
hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and
10 drove them out before you, and gave you their land; and I said to you,
'I am the LORD your God; you shall not pay reverence to the gods of the
Amorites, in whose land you dwell.' But you have not given heed to my
voice."

11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the sacred tree at Ophrah,
which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite,[40] as his son Gideon was beating out
12 wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of
the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you
13 mighty man of valor." And Gideon said to him, "Pray, sir, if the LORD is
with us, why then has all this befallen us? And where are all his wonder-
ful deeds which our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD
bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us
14 into the hand of Midian." And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in
this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; do not
15 I send you?" And he said to him, "Pray, LORD, how can I deliver Israel?
Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my

37. Just as Deborah and Barak bring an end to Canaanite oppression, so Gideon delivers his people from the invasions of the Bedouins, especially the so-called Midianites. These Midianites (perhaps related to those mentioned in connection with Moses) did not wish to occupy the land, but only to plunder and secure supplies from the more settled inhabitants.

38. See the similar introduction to the story of Deborah and Note 15.

39. Much of the material in this section is from J, although excerpts from E and additions by the later editor are also present (but not easily distinguished).

40. The Abiezrites, Gideon's people, were a branch of the tribe of Manasseh.

16 family." And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall
17 smite the Midianites as one man." And he said to him, "If now I have found favor with thee, then show me a sign that it is thou who speakest
18 with me. Do not depart from here, I pray thee, until I come to thee, and bring out my present, and set it before thee." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah[41] of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the tree and presented
20 them. And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them."
21 And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and there sprang up fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and the un-
22 leavened cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to
23 face."[42] But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall
24 not die." Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it, The LORD is peace.[43] To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

25 That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which your father
26 has, and cut down the Asherah[44] that is beside it; and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the
27 wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down." So Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had told him; but because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

28 When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and
29 the second bull was offered upon the altar which had been built. And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had made search and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has
30 done this thing." Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and
31 cut down the Asherah beside it." But Joash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause?

41. An ephah was equal to a little more than a bushel.
42. See the last sentence of Note 16, Chapter V.
43. "The *LORD* is peace" is a translation of the name *Jahweh-shalom.*
44. See Note 72, Chapter V. The Asherah was the symbol of the female counterpart of Baal.

Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him take his own part, because his altar has been pulled down."
32 Therefore on that day he was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he pulled down his altar.[45]
33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and crossing the Jordan they encamped in the Valley of
34 Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.
35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they went up to meet them.
36 Then Gideon said to God, "If thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as
37 thou hast said, behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that thou wilt deliver Israel by my hand, as thou hast
38 said."[46] And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.
39 Then Gideon said to God, "Let not thy anger burn against me, let me speak but this once; pray, let me make trial only this once with the fleece; pray, let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be
40 dew." And God did so that night; for it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
2 The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves
3 against me, saying, 'My own hand has delivered me.' Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home.'" And Gideon tested them; twenty-two thousand returned, and ten thousand remained.
4 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; take them down to the water and I will test them for you there; and he of whom I say to you, 'This man shall go with you,' shall go with you; and any of whom I say to you, 'This man shall not go with you,' shall not go."
5 So he brought the people down to the water; and the LORD said to Gideon, "Every one that laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall

45. Even though the altar to Baal is said to have belonged to Joash, yet Joash comes to the support of Gideon. Gideon's first act was thus to purify Hebrew religion from Canaanite influence. The name Jerubbaal, found here, comes from E, where it was used instead of the name Gideon.

46. Gideon, according to early custom, desired some physical sign as proof of deity's will or approval. In order to be doubly sure he asks not only for one such sign, but for two.

6 set by himself; likewise every one that kneels down to drink." And the
number of those that lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was
three hundred men; but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink
7 water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that
lapped I will deliver you, and give the Midianites into your hand; and
8 let all the others go every man to his home."[47] So he took the jars of
the people from their hands, and their trumpets; and he sent all the
rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the three hundred
men; and the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9 That same night the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the
10 camp; for I have given it into your hand. But if you fear to go down,
11 go down to the camp with Purah your servant; and you shall hear what
they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down
against the camp."[48] Then he went down with Purah his servant to the
12 outposts of the armed men that were in the camp. And the Midianites
and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along in the
valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number,
13 as the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude. When Gideon came,
behold a man was telling a dream to his comrade; and he said, "Behold,
I dreamed a dream; and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp
of Midian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell, and turned
14 it upside down, so that the tent lay flat." And his comrade answered,
"This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of
Israel; into his hand God has given Midian and all the host."[49]

15 When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he
worshiped; and he returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise; for
16 the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand." And he divided
the three hundred men into three companies, and put trumpets into the
17 hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. And
he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise; when I come to the
18 outskirts of the camp, do as I do. When I blow the trumpet, I and all
who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the
camp, and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.' "

47. This part of the story is usually interpreted to mean that those who remained upright, lapping the water from their hands, were the more alert in the face of danger, and hence would make the better fighters. It has also been suggested, however, that those who lapped the water lay flat at the water's edge and thus drank directly from the stream ("as a dog laps"—verse 5); in this case they would be regarded as more fierce than those who remained on their knees and therefore should be chosen. In connection with the latter interpretation it must be assumed that the words "putting their hands to their mouths" (verse 6) referred originally to those who remained upon their knees.

48. Verses 10 and 11 mean that if Gideon fears to attack at once he might make a preliminary investigation in order to see the situation in the enemy camp.

49. The "cake of barley bread" is thus interpreted to mean Gideon. The incident convinces Gideon that since the Midianites are apprehensive his own chances of success are therefore great. Also, dreams were regarded as previews of reality.

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that
20 were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars, holding in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow; and they cried, "A sword for the LORD and
21 for Gideon!" They stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the army ran; they cried out and fled.[50]

JEPHTHAH—Judges 10:9; 11:29-39a

10:9 (R) And the Ammonites crossed the Jordan to fight also against Judah and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sorely distressed.

11:29 (J)[51] Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed on to Mizpeh[52] of Gilead, and
30 from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If thou wilt give the Ammonites into
31 my hand, then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the LORD's,
32 and I will offer him up for a burnt offering." So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the LORD gave them into
33 his hand. And he smote them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a very great slaughter. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.
34 Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; she was his
35 only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back
36 my vow."[53] And she said to him, "My father, if you have opened your

50. Because of his willingness to attack such a large army as that of the Midianites with an absurdly small force of his own, Gideon has become a symbol of great faith in God. Other qualities of the man should also be noted.

51. Although J seems to be the source of much of the material which follows, some parts undoubtedly come also from E.

52. That is, Mizpah.

53. These words seem to imply that Jephthah had not expected his own daughter to be the one whom he should sacrifice in fulfillment of his vow (verses 30 and 31). Since she was his only child, however, he must have expected that she might be the first to meet him. Although child sacrifice was not generally practiced by the Hebrews at this time, it appears that the custom was observed upon certain rare occasions. The Hebrews eventually reject entirely, of course, the idea that God should desire any such sacrifice: emphasis is placed

mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth, now that the LORD has avenged you on your enemies, on the
37 Ammonites." And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go and wander on the moun-
38 tains, and bewail my virginity,[54] I and my companions." And he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she departed, she and
39 her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had made. . . .

SAMSON[55]—Judges 13:24—16:31

13:24 (J) And the woman[56] bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the
25 boy grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshta-ol.

14:1 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daugh-
2 ters of the Philistines. Then he came up, and told his father and mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah; now get her
3 for me as my wife." But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your kinsmen, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me; for she pleases me well."

4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD; for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and he came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion roared
6 against him; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid; and he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.
7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson

later, especially by the prophets, upon the fact that there are far better ways of showing loyalty to Him.

54. That is, she wishes to bewail the fact that she is to be deprived, by death, of ever having children.

55. The stories of Samson contain an unusual combination of historical tradition and folk-tale. Samson is represented as a "Nazirite" (that is, one who is "separated" or "consecrated" to Jahweh—see *Judges* 16:17, below). As a Nazirite his hair was never to be cut. (His remarkable strength is described as remaining with him as long as his hair is left uncut.) His exploits concern his relationships with the Philistines, who were probably of European origin, and from whom the name "Palestine" is derived.

56. This refers to the wife of a certain Manoah, of the tribe of Dan. At this time the tribe was located near Philistine territory, though it later migrated to the north, apparently as the result of Philistine pressure.

well. And after a while he returned to take her; and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. He scraped it out into his hands, and went on, eating as he went; and he came to his father and mother, and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

And his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a feast there; for so the young men used to do. And when the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you; if you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments; but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat.
Out of the strong came something sweet."

And they could not in three days tell what the riddle was.

On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?" And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, "You only hate me, you do not love me; you have put a riddle to my countrymen, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted; and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her countrymen. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have found out my riddle."

And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty men of the town, and took their spoil and gave the festal garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.[57]

57. Apparently the marriage was not of the usual type. Since the two belonged to different peoples she had remained with her family. Now the wife is given to another man.

15:1 After a while, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson went to visit
his wife with a kid; and he said, "I will go in to my wife in the chamber."
2 But her father would not allow him to go in. And her father said,
"I really thought that you utterly hated her; so I gave her to your
companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Pray take her
3 instead." And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless
4 in regard to the Philistines, when I do them mischief." So Samson went
and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches; and he turned them
5 tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. And when he
had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain
of the Philistines, and burned up the shocks and the standing grain,
6 as well as the olive orchards. Then the Philistines said, "Who has
done this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite,
because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And
7 the Philistines came up, and burned her and her father with fire. And
Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged
8 upon you, and after that I will quit." And he smote them hip and
thigh with great slaughter; and he went down and stayed in the cleft
of the rock of Etam.

9 Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah, and made a raid
10 on Lehi. And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against
us?" They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he
11 did to us." Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft
of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the
Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done
to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so have I done to
12 them." And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we
may give you into the hands of the Philistines."[58] And Samson said to
13 them, "Swear to me that you will not fall upon me yourselves." They
said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands;
we will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes, and
brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him; and
the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the ropes which were
on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted
15 off his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put out
16 his hand and seized it, and with it he slew a thousand men. And Samson
said,

"With the jawbone of an ass,
heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of an ass
have I slain a thousand men."

58. Since Samson was of another tribe (that of Dan) the men of Judah did not feel

17 And when he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand; and that place was called Ramath-lehi.[59]
18 And he was very thirsty, and he called on the LORD and said, "Thou hast granted this great deliverance by the hand of thy servant; and shall I now die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?"
19 And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and there came water from it; and when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefor the name of it was called En-hakkore;[60] it is at Lehi to this day.
20 (R) And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

16:1 (J) Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a harlot, and he went in to
2 her. The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here," and they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the
3 morning; then we will kill him." But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.
4 After this he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was
5 Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came to her and said to her, "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to subdue him; and we
6 will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver." And Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me wherein your great strength lies, and how
7 you might be bound, that one could subdue you." And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings which have not been
8 dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Then the lords of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings which had
9 not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had men lying in wait in an inner chamber. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the bowstrings, as a string of tow snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.
10 And Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have mocked me, and told
11 me lies; please tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become
12 weak, and be like any other man." So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Sam-

obligated to protect him. This indicates, incidentally, the lack of unity among the various Hebrew tribes.

59. That is, "The Hill of the Jawbone."

60. That is, "The Spring of him who called." The original meaning, however, was probably the "Partridge Spring," since "the caller" is the Hebrew name for the partridge.

son!" And the men lying in wait were in an inner chamber. But he snapped them off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me, and told me lies; tell me how you might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and make it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them
14 into the web. And she made them tight with the pin, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled away the pin, the loom, and the web.[61]

15 And she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have
16 not told me wherein your great strength lies." And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was
17 vexed to death. And he told her all his mind, and said to her, "A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I be shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his mind, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up this once, for he has told me all his mind." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to
19 her, and brought the money in their hands. She made him sleep upon her knees; and she called a man, and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength
20 left him. And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free." And he did not know that the LORD had left
21 him.[62] And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze fetters; and he
22 ground at the mill in the prison. But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, "Our god has given
24 Samson our enemy into our hand." And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into
25 our hand, the ravager of our country, who has slain many of us." And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, that he may make sport for us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he made
26 sport before them.[63] They made him stand between the pillars; and

61. The "web" and the "pin" were parts of the loom.

62. This suggests that Jahweh was no longer with him because the Nazirite vow had been broken by the cutting of his hair (although he himself had not been responsible).

63. That is, he caused them much merriment. Verse 25 should probably come before verse 24, for the people obviously "saw him" (verse 24) only after he had been called.

Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the
27 pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them." Now
the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines
were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and
women,[64] who looked on while Samson made sport.
28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord God, remember me,
I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God,
that I may be avenged upon the Philistines for one of my two eyes."
29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars upon which the house rested,
and he leaned his weight upon them, his right hand on the one and his
30 left hand on the other. And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philis-
tines." Then he bowed with all his might; and the house fell upon
the lords and upon all the people that were in it. So the dead whom he
slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain during his
31 life.[65] Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him
and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshta-ol in
the tomb of Manoah his father. (R) He had judged Israel twenty years.[66]

64. This number is clearly an exaggeration.

65. The account of Samson's death suggests a picture of early houses and buildings. The roof was supported by upright logs or "pillars" placed upon flat stones. If the lower ends of these supports could be forced off of the stones the roof would then collapse.

66. It is not difficult to understand how a man of such physical strength as that possessed by Samson should have become a popular hero in later Hebrew thought. His accomplishments, however, certainly do not equal those of the other judges who helped the Hebrews to establish themselves more firmly in Canaan. Consider carefully his characteristics and his motives, and compare him with the other judges.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNITED KINGDOM—THE REIGN OF SAUL

In this chapter and in the two which follow we have accounts concerning the greatest period of Hebrew political history. Under the leadership of the three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, the Hebrew nation achieved security and considerable prosperity.

Saul, the first of these kings, appears as a man of great accomplishments and also as a man of unfortunate weaknesses. He succeeded in unifying the various tribes to a great extent and in subduing some of their enemies. He was loyal to his God in numerous ways. But his life involved qualities or characteristics which prevented him from becoming a truly great ruler. Because of his strength and his weaknesses he provides one of the most interesting character studies to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. The reign of Saul continued for some fifteen or twenty years, ending about the year 1013 B.C.

The material from this chapter is drawn from the Old Testament books of *I* and *II Samuel*. Originally, in Hebrew, all of *I* and *II Samuel* constituted a single volume or scroll. When the translation was made into Greek, however, two scrolls were required. (Whereas the Hebrew language was written only with the consonants, the Greek included vowels also, and hence occupied more space.) Thus the material was divided into two parts.

Most of the Biblical text here comes from two chief sources. Some scholars believe these sources to be entirely distinct from the sources of the Pentateuch or Hexateuch; hence they have been designated in various ways. It is true, however, that in some respects these sources, an earlier and a later, do bear marked resemblances to the J and E of the Hexateuch. Other scholars, therefore, contend that J and E were not confined to material now found in the Hexateuch only, but included also material found throughout *I* and *II Samuel* and in the first two chapters of *I Kings*. In the sections which follow here there is the continued use of J and E to distinguish the earlier and the later sources. The reader may or may not choose to identify them with the J and E of the Hexateuch and regard them as continuations of those sources.

In these sources there are certain differences which should be noted. The author of the early source (J) regards the monarchy as desirable, approved by God, and as a forward step in the development of the Hebrew nation. The writer of the later source (E), on the other hand, looks upon it as rebellion against God Himself (who alone should be the King) and as the cause of the misfortunes which later befell the Israelites. It may be observed also that Samuel, who plays an important role in the establishing of the kingdom, appears in a different light in the two accounts: according to J he is represented as a little-known seer from whom Saul seeks help and who apprehends the divine will that Saul is to be the first king; according to E he is the well-known judge of all Israel. The two sources were probably combined sometime during the sixth century, B.C.

The books of *Samuel* contain important historical information together with elements of interpretation and popular tradition. It must be remembered, of course, that the writers, although concerning themselves with history, were interpreting that history from their own religious points of view. In whatever ways they may differ as they observed and interpreted the history, they were nevertheless attempting to show that in the history God was active among His people.

1:1 (E) There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country
of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu,
2 son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives; the name
of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. And
Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.
3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship
and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh,[2] where the two sons
4 of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. On the day
when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife
5 and to all her sons and daughters; and, although he loved Hannah, he
would give Hannah only one portion, because the LORD had closed her
6 womb. And her rival used to provoke her sorely, to irritate her, because
7 the LORD had closed her womb. So it went on year by year; as often as
she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore
8 Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her,
"Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your
heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"
9 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. And Eli the
priest was sitting upon the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of
10 the LORD. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept
11 bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt
indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant, and remember me, and
not forget thy maidservant, but wilt give to thy maidservant a son,
then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor
shall touch his head."[3]
12 As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.
13 Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice
14 was not heard; therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli
said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from
15 you." But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman sorely
troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been
16 pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not regard your maidservant as
a base woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety
17 and vexation." Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel
18 grant your petition which you have made to him." And she said, "Let

1. Samuel is presented as extremely important in connection with the establishing of the monarchy. In the first part of *I Samuel* he appears as the last of the judges, designating Saul as the first king; in the latter part he is presented as a prophet who, as an agent of God, stands as a kind of power behind the throne. The account of his birth in the present section is a particularly well-told popular tale.

2. Shiloh was the religious center, where the Ark was kept.

3. For a reference to the Nazirite vow, see Note 55, Chapter VI.

your maidservant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her countenance was no longer sad.

19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his
20 wife, and the LORD remembered her; and in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."[4]

21 And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD
22 the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and abide
23 there forever."[5] Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned
24 him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh, and the child was
25 young. Then they slew the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.
26 And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who
27 was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me my petition which I made to him.
28 Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.

And they worshiped the LORD there.

3:1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he
3 could not see, was lying down in his own place; the lamp of God had not yet gone out,[6] and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the
4 LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel!
5 Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So
6 he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called
7 me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel

4. The writer is here attempting to make a word-play upon the name "Samuel," suggesting that the name carries the idea of "asking." Some scholars believe that this part of the story was originally told of Saul rather than of Samuel, since the name "Saul" more clearly means "asked for" (verse 20) or "lent" (see verse 28).

5. In praying for a son, Hannah had promised to dedicate the child to Jahweh. She now indicates that she will take him to live at the sanctuary at Shiloh.

6. A lamp, supplied with sufficient oil for one night only, was evidently kept burning in the sanctuary as long as the oil lasted.

did not yet know the LORD,[7] and the word of the LORD had not yet been
8 revealed to him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And
he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."
9 Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli
said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak,
LORD, for thy servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.
10 And the LORD came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel!
11 Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." Then the
LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel, at
12 which the two ears of every one that hears it will tingle. On that day
I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house,
13 from beginning to end. And I tell him that I am about to punish his
house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were
14 blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to
the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated
by sacrifice or offering for ever."
15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of
16 the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli
called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am."
17 And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May
God do so to you[8] and more also, if you hide anything from me of all
18 that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from
him. And he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."[9]
19 And Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him and let none of his
20 words fall to the ground.[10] And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba[11]
21 knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. And the
LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel
at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all
Israel.

THE ESTABLISHING OF THE MONARCHY[12]

I Samuel 8:1—11:15

8:1 (E) When Samuel became old,[13] he made his sons judges over Israel.
2 The name of his first-born son was Joel, and the name of his second,

7. That is, Samuel did not know Jahweh through personal experience, only by report.

8. Animals were sometimes slain as sacrifices when oaths were taken. "God do so to you" seems to refer to the fate of the animal which was thus killed.

9. This account of Samuel's experience is intended to indicate that even in his youth he was one through whom God spoke and revealed His will.

10. This means that Jahweh let "none of his words" remain unfulfilled.

11. This comment by the writer was made, of course, after the migration of the tribe of Dan to the north. See Note 56, Chapter VI.

12. Accounts from the earlier and later sources are mingled in the present Biblical text. Read first the J version (*I Samuel* 9:1 - 10:16 and 11:1-15), then the E version (*I Samuel* 8:1-22 and 10:17-27). Observe carefully the different emphases, points of view, and details.

3 Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. Yet his sons did not walk in
his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted
justice.
4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at
5 Ramah, and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk
in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the na-
6 tions." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a
7 king to govern us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said
to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to
you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from
8 being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done
to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day,
9 forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now
then, hearken to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and
show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."
10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking
11 a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will
reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots
12 and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will ap-
point for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties,
and some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and to make his imple-
13 ments of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daugh-
14 ters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your
15 fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He
will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his
16 officers and to his servants. He will take your menservants and maidserv-
ants, and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to his work.
17,18 He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And
in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen
for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day."[14]
19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said,
20 "No! but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the na-
tions, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our
21 battles." And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he re-
22 peated them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel,
"Hearken to their voice, and make them a king." Samuel then said to the
men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

13. In omitted passages it is related that the Philistines at first defeat the Hebrews, but later are temporarily subdued. Samuel becomes judge.

14. Although verses 10-18 appear here as a prediction, they reflect the events which actually occurred after the monarchy had been established. The later writer, looking back over the course of Hebrew history, regards the evils of the monarchy as responsible for the unhappy state of affairs.

9:1 (J) There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of
Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man
2 of wealth; and he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man.
There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than
he; from his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.
3 Now the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul
his son, "Take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for
4 the asses." And they passed through the hill country of Ephraim and
passed through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. And they
passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they
passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.
5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was
with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the
6 asses and become anxious about us." But he said to him, "Behold, there
is a man of God in this city, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that
he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the jour-
7 ney on which we have set out." Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we
go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and
8 there is no present to bring to the man of God. What have we?" The
servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me the fourth part of a
shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God, to tell us our way."
9 (R) (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said,
"Come, let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was
10 formerly called a seer.)[15] (J) And Saul said to his servant, "Well said;
come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.
11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met young maidens coming
12 out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?" They answered,
"He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Make haste; he has come just now
to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place.[16]
13 As soon as you enter the city, you will find him, before he goes up to the
high place to eat; for the people will not eat till he comes, since he must
bless the sacrifice; afterward those eat who are invited. Now go up, for
14 you will meet him immediately." So they went up to the city. As they
were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his
way up to the high place.
15 (R) Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:
16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of

15. Samuel is thus represented as a "seer," one who possessed a divine gift which enabled him to see what ordinary people could not see. It was customary for such a seer to receive a fee in payment for his services. The late editor (R) here confuses two types of persons which originally were quite distinct. For the early use of the term "prophet" consult Note 20, below.

16. The "high place" is a common expression referring to sanctuaries where sacrifices were offered.

Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen
17 the affliction of my people, because their cry has come to me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke
18 to you! He it is who shall rule over my people." (J) Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate, and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?"
19 Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer; go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and
20 will tell you all that is on your mind. As for your asses that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for
21 all your father's house?" Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my family the humblest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who
23 were about thirty persons. And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the por-
24 tion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.' " So the cook took up the leg and the upper portion and set them before Saul; and Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat; because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests."

25 So Saul ate with Samuel that day. And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul upon the roof, and he
26 lay down to sleep. Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, "Up, that I may send you on your way." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God."

10:1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their enemies round about. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over
2 his heritage.[17] When you depart from me today you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, 'The asses which you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the asses and is anxious about you, say-

17. The experiences described in the following verses (2-13) are intended to be indications of Jahweh's choice of Saul.

3 ing, "What shall I do about my son?" ' Then you shall go on from there
further and come to the oak of Tabor; three men going up to God[18] at
Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three kids, another carrying
4 three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will
greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from
5 their hand. After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim,[19] where there is
a garrison of the Philistines; and there, as you come to the city, you will
meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with harp,
6 tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.[20] Then the Spirit
of the LORD will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with
7 them and be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you,
8 do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. (R) And you
shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I am coming to you to
offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall
wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

9 (J) When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another
10 heart; and all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to
Gibe-ah, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came
11 mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And when all who
knew him before saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people
said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also
12 among the prophets?" And a man of the place answered, "And who is
their father?"[21] (R) Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among
13 the prophets?" (J) When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high
place.

14 Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And
he said, "To seek the asses; and when we saw they were not to be found,
15 we went to Samuel." And Saul's uncle said, "Pray, tell me what Samuel
16 said to you." And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the asses
had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel
had spoken, he did not tell him anything.

17 (E) Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah;
18 and he said to the people of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel,
'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of
the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppres-
19 sing you.' But you have this day rejected your God, who saves you from

18. "Going up to God" means "going up to worship God at the sanctuary."

19. That is, "the Hill of God." The place is called Gibe-ah in verse 10 and elsewhere.

20. To "prophesy," in these early times, meant to be in a state of religious frenzy as some "spirit" came upon them and moved them. Those who were given to this type of activity often traveled in bands or groups. Prophets of this sort had little to do with any message involving real intellectual or moral content. The meaning of prophecy changes, of course, in later times.

21. This question is intended to express surprise that Saul, a man of a wealthy family, should associate with "prophets" (dervishes) of insignificant background or family.

all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said, 'No! but set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands."

20 Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of
21 Benjamin was taken by lot.[22] He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the family of the Matrites was taken by lot; finally he brought the family of the Matrites near man by man, and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be
22 found. So they inquired again of the LORD, "Did the man[23] come hither?" and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."
23 Then they ran and fetched him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders up-
24 ward. And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

25 Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship; and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel
26 sent all the people away, each one to his home. Saul also went to his home at Gibe-ah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had
27 touched. But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man save us?" And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

11:1 (J) Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we
2 will serve you." But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes,
3 and thus put disgrace upon all Israel." The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give our-
4 selves up to you." When the messengers came to Gibe-ah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people; and all the people wept aloud.

5 Now Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen; and Saul said, "What ails the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the tid-
6 ings of the men of Jabesh. And the Spirit of God came mightily upon
7 Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does

22. The expression "was taken," here and in the following verse, means "was chosen" by lot. It was supposed that in the casting of lots the divine will would be revealed. Here the lots are cast three times in order to determine the tribe, the family, and finally the individual identity of the person who should be made king.

23. Namely, Saul.

not come out after Saul (R) and Samuel, (J) so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came
8 out as one man. When he mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel were
9 three hundred thousand, (R) and the men of Judah thirty thousand. (J) And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Tomorrow by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance.' " When the messengers came and told the men of
10 Jabesh, they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever seems
11 good to you." And on the morrow Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and cut down the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and those who survived were scattered so that no two of them were left together.

12 (R) Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is it that said, 'Shall Saul
13 reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has
14 wrought deliverance in Israel." Then Samuel said to the people, "Come,
15 let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom."[24] (J) So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.[25]

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE—I Samuel 15

15:1 (E) And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore hearken to the words of the LORD.
2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish what Amalek did to Israel in
3 opposing them on the way, when they came up out of Egypt.[26] Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' "[27]

4 So Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, (R)
5 two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. (E)

24. Since the editor includes two accounts of Saul being made king, he uses the expression, *"renew* the kingdom," in order to reconcile the two versions.

25. *I Samuel* 11:1-15 suggests that Saul gave promise of being an effective king by his speedy and successful action in saving the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonite threat.

26. In an omitted Biblical account (*Exodus* 17:8-16) it was reported (E) that the Amalekites had attacked the Israelites while they were on the way from Egypt to Canaan.

27. This command that Saul should utterly destroy the Amalekites is, of course, contrary to later ideas of God's will. It is, however, in harmony with the primitive belief that a people's God should desire the destruction of that people's (and hence that God's) enemy. (See Note 8, Chapter VI.) It is to be noted that even though Saul is now king, Samuel (as a prophet and agent of God) remains in a position of supreme authority.

6 And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. And Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt."[28] So the Kenites de-
7 parted from among the Amalekites. And Saul defeated the Amalekites,
8 from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with
9 the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed.[29]

10,11 The word of the LORD came to Samuel: "I repent that I have made Saul king; for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry; and he cried to the
12 LORD all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal."
13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the
14 LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD." And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing
15 of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."
16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Say on."

17 And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over
18 Israel. And the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are con-
19 sumed.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you
20 swoop on the spoil, and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, I have brought Agag the king
21 of Amalek, and I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruc-
22 tion, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." And Samuel said,

"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
as in obeying the voice of the LORD?

28. The reference here is to Jethro and his people. In *Exodus* Jethro is called a priest of Midian, but he seems to have belonged to a branch of the Midianites known as Kenites.

29. Thus, instead of obeying the command to destroy everything, the Hebrews kept for sacrifice, and presumably for a great feast accompanying the sacrifice, that which would serve this purpose.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
and to hearken than the fat of rams.[30]
23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has also rejected you from being king."

24 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people
25 and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin, and return
26 with me, that I may worship the LORD." And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the
27 LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." (R) As Samuel turned
28 to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.
29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or repent; for he is not a man,
30 that he should repent." (E) Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me,
31 that I may worship the LORD your God." So Samuel turned back after Saul; and Saul worshiped the LORD.
32 Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of
33 death is past." And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.
34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibe-ah
35 of Saul. And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.[31]

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID—I Samuel 16

16:1 (E) The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have
2 provided for myself a king among his sons." And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer

30. Do not fail to note the significance of the idea expressed in this verse.

31. It may seem to some that Saul's action as described in this section hardly justifies the verdict that he was not a worthy king. His conduct must be judged, however, in the light of the conviction of his time, that it *was* God's will thus to destroy utterly all of Israel's (and therefore God's) enemy. Later accounts will indicate that for other reasons also Saul did not possess the proper qualifications.

3 with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' And invite Jesse
to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall
4 anoint for me him whom I name to you." Samuel did what the LORD
commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet
5 him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peace-
ably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; consecrate yourselves, and come
with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and
invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's
7 anointed is before him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on
his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him;
for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance,
8 but the LORD looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made
him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this
9 one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the
10 LORD chosen this one." And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Sam-
11 uel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." And
Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There re-
mains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Sam-
uel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he
12 comes here." And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and
had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint
13 him; for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him
in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily
upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to
Ramah.

14 (J) Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit
15 from the LORD tormented him.[32] And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold
16 now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now com-
mand your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is skillful
in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he
17 will play it, and you will be well." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide
18 for me a man who can play well, and bring him to me." One of the young
men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who
is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech,
19 and a man of good presence; and the LORD is with him." Therefore Saul
sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me David your son, (R) who is
20 with the sheep." (J) And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a skin
21 of wine and a kid, and sent them by David his son to Saul. And David
came to Saul, and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and
22 he became his armor-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David

32. Not only disease, but also states of melancholy or despondency, such as Saul exhibits in the following verses, were thought to be caused by the presence of evil spirits.

23 remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.[33]

DAVID AND GOLIATH—I Samuel 17:1-11, 32-58

17:1 (E) Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Soco, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between
2 Soco and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in line
3 of battle against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side,
4 with a valley between them. And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six
5 cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was
6 armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.[34] And he had greaves of bronze upon his
7 legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six
8 hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose
9 a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against
10 him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, that
11 we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. . . .

32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your
33 servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you
34 are but a youth,[35] and he has been a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and
35 when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed

33. The editor who combined the sources included in this section has arranged the material in such a way that a highly dramatic effect is produced. Saul is described as loving "greatly" the very one who (unknown to him) has been chosen to succeed him as king.

34. This would be considerably more than 200 pounds.

35. According to this source (E) David is pictured as an unknown shepherd lad. According to J (16:18, above) he is presented as a "man of war."

him. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" Then Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a helmet of bronze on his head, and clothed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword over his armor, and he tried in vain to go, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them." And David put them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in his wallet; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and comely in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field." Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give you into our hand."

When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel (R) and Judah (E) rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Sha-araim as far as Gath and Ekron. And the Israelites came back from chasing the Philistines, and

54 they plundered their camp. (R) And David took the head of the Philistine
and brought it to Jerusalem;[36] but he put his armor in his tent.
55 (E) When Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said to
Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?"[37]
56 And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I cannot tell." And the
57 king said, "Inquire whose son the stripling is." And as David returned
from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him
58 before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to
him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the
son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID—I Samuel 18:1-16

18:1 (E) When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was
2 knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.[38] And
Saul took him that day, and would not let him return to his father's
3 house. (J) Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, (R) because he
4 loved him as his own soul. (J) And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe
that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his
5 sword and his bow and his girdle. And David went out and was successful
wherever Saul sent him; so that Saul set him over the men of war. And
this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's
servants.
6 As they were coming home, (E) when David returned from slaying the
Philistine, (J) the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and
dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with songs of joy, and with
7 instruments of music. And the women sang to one another as they made
merry,

"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

8 And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him; he said, "They
have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thous-
9 ands; and what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul eyed
David from that day on.[39]
10 (E) And on the morrow an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and
he raved within his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did

36. The reference to Jerusalem is unintelligible, for the Hebrews have not yet taken that city. As indicated, this verse is not a part of the original story.

37. According to this source (E) David and Saul have not yet become acquainted with each other. The previous account of their relationship comes from the earlier source.

38. Jonathan is Saul's son.

39. That is, Saul "eyed" David with jealousy.

11 day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand; and Saul cast the spear, for
he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice.
12 Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him but had
13 departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence, and made
him a commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the
14 people. And David had success in all his undertakings; for the LORD
15 was with him. And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood
16 in awe of him. But all Israel (R) and Judah (E) loved David; for he went
out and came in before them.

DAVID AND JONATHAN—I Samuel 19 - 20

19:1 (E) And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that
they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in
2 David. (R) And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you;
therefore take heed to yourself in the morning, stay in a secret place and
3 hide yourself; and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field
where you are, and I will speak to my father about you; and if I learn
4 anything I will tell you." (E) And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul
his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David;
because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have been of
5 good service to you; for he took his life in his hand and he slew the
Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great victory for all Israel. You saw
it, and rejoiced; why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing
6 David without cause?" And Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan;
7 Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." And Jona-
than called David, and Jonathan showed him all these things. And Jona-
than brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.
8 And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the
Philistines, and made a great slaughter among them, so that they fled
9 before him. Then an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul, as he sat
in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing the lyre.
10 And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear; but he eluded
Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled, and
escaped.
11 (J) That night Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him,
that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife,[40] told
him, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed."
12 So Michal let David down through the window; and he fled away and
13 escaped. Michal took an image[41] and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of

40. Michal is Saul's daughter, who had become David's wife.
41. The Hebrew text has "teraphim" here rather than "image." Teraphim seem to have been some kind of household gods.

14 goats' hair at its head, and covered it with clothes. And when Saul sent mes-
15 sengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Then Saul sent the mes-
sengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may
16 kill him." And when the messengers came in, behold, the image was in
17 the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. Saul said to Michal,
"Why have you deceived me thus, and let my enemy go, so that he has
escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go; why
should I kill you?' "[42]

18 (E) Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah,
and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and
19 dwelt at Naioth. And it was told Saul, "Behold, David is at Naioth in
20 Ramah." Then Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw
the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head
over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they
21 also prophesied. When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and
they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and
22 they also prophesied. Then he himself went to Ramah, and came to the
great well that is in Secu; and he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"
23 And one said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." And he went from
there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and
24 as he went he prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he
too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel, and
lay naked all that day and all that night. Hence it is said, "Is Saul also
among the prophets?"[43]

20:1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before
Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin
2 before your father, that he seeks my life?" And he said to him, "Far be it!
You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small
without disclosing it to me; and why should my father hide this from me?
3 It is not so." But David replied, "Your father knows well that I have found
favor in your eyes; and he thinks, 'Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be
grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but
4 a step between me and death." Then said Jonathan to David, "Whatever
5 you say, I will do for you." David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow
is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king; but
let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening.
6 If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of
me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for

42. Thus Saul's jealousy of David undoubtedly increased: he saw that David not only was popular with the people, but also had the affection and help of his own son and daughter, Jonathan and Michal.

43. The last verses here constitute (in E) a parallel to the J account in *I Samuel* 10:1-13. See Notes 20 and 21.

all the family.' If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant; but if he is angry, then know that evil is determined by him. Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a sacred covenant with you. But if there is guilt in me, slay me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?" And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that evil should come upon you, would I not tell you?" Then said David to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. If I am still alive, show me the loyal love of the LORD, that I may not die; and do not cut off your loyalty from my house for ever. When the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David. And may the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies." And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. And on the third day you will be greatly missed; then go to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand,[44] and remain beside yonder stone heap. And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. And behold, I will send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. But if I say to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go; for the LORD has sent you away.[45] And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me for ever."

So David hid himself in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. The king sat upon his seat, as at other times, upon the seat by the wall; Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

Yet Saul did not say anything that day; for he thought, "Something has

44. It is not known to what this refers.

45. According to the signal thus arranged, David, overhearing Jonathan's words to the boy, will know whether to come out of hiding or to flee. Jonathan's words, of course, are to be determined by Saul's reaction when he misses David at the feast (verses 6 and 7).

befallen him; he is not clean, surely he is not clean.[46] But on the second day, the morrow after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem; he said, 'Let me go; for our family holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away, and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established.[47] Therefore send and fetch him to me, for he shall surely die." Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" But Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; so Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little lad. And he said to his lad, "Run and find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad came to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, make haste, stay not." So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew nothing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city." And as soon as the lad had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times; and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David recovered himself. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, for ever.' " And he rose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.[48]

46. Certain ceremonial cleansings were required before one could participate in such feasts.

47. Saul seems to suppose that David's popularity will result in his becoming king at Saul's death. Thus, in remaining loyal to David and in helping to preserve David's life, Jonathan is sacrificing his own chances of becoming king.

48. Some scholars believe that verses 40-42 do not belong to the original story, for according to the pre-arranged plan Jonathan and David were not to meet openly.

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR—I Samuel 28

28:1 (J) In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, "Understand that you and your
2 men are to go out with me in the army."[49] David said to Achish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."
3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the
4 wizards out of the land.[50] The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at
5 Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and
6 his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim,[51] or by prophets.
7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at Endor."
8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments, and went, he and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit, and bring up for me whomever I shall name
9 to you." The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then
10 are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?" But Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come
11 upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up
12 for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." When the woman saw Samuel,[52] she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman said to Saul,
13 "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul." The king said to her, "Have no fear; what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god[53]
14 coming up out of the earth." He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up; and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

49. David has sought refuge with Achish, a Philistine king. David pretends to be more loyal to the Philistines than he really is.

50. Saul is here reported to have forbidden the practice of a sort of spiritualism common in that day, evidently regarding it as contrary to his own religious faith. Yet, in the following account, he himself consults a woman who was engaged in that practice. It is a pathetic picture of a man induced to engage in something he himself had previously attempted to suppress.

51. "Urim" is a term which was used in connection with the casting of lots in order to determine the divine will. See Note 22.

52. Perhaps "Saul" should be read here instead of "Samuel." It is possible, however, that the request for Samuel aroused the woman's suspicions; then, upon closer scrutiny, she recognized Saul.

53. The reference here is, of course, to the "spirit" of Samuel.

15 Then Samuel said to Saul,[54] "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress; for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; therefore I have summoned
16 you to tell me what I shall do." And Samuel said, "Why then do you
17 ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? (R) The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me; for the LORD has torn the
18 kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this
19 day. (J) Moreover the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me;[55] (R) the LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."
20 (J) Then Saul fell at once full length upon the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him, for he
21 had eaten nothing all day and all night. And the woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, "Behold, your handmaid has hearkened to you; I have taken my life in my hand, and
22 have hearkened to what you have said to me. Now therefore, you also hearken to your handmaid; let me set a morsel of bread before you;
23 and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way." He refused, and said, "I will not eat." But his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he hearkened to their words. So he arose from the
24 earth, and sat upon the bed. Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour, and kneaded it and
25 baked unleavened bread of it, and she put it before Saul and his servants; and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

THE DEATH OF SAUL—I Samuel 31

31:1 (J) Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel
2 fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan
3 and Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. The battle pressed hard upon Saul, and the archers found him; and he was badly wounded by
4 the archers. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and make sport of me." But the armor-bearer would not; for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword, and fell upon it.
5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon
6 his sword, and died with him. Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his

54. It is undoubtedly meant that Samuel speaks to Saul through the medium.
55. That is, they shall fall in the battle and join him in the realm of the dead.

armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together. And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

On the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth;[56] and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan; and they came to Jabesh and burnt them there. And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.[57]

DAVID'S LAMENT OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN

II Samuel 1

(J) After the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag; and on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes rent and earth upon his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and did obeisance. David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." And David said to him, "How did it go? Tell me." And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, and many of the people also have fallen and are dead; and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead." Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa; and there was Saul leaning upon his spear; and lo, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' And he said to me, 'Stand beside me and slay me; for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' So I stood beside him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after

56. "Ashtaroth" is the plural of "Ashtoreth," referring here to female deities.

57. The men of Gilead, who had received help from Saul on a previous occasion (*I Samuel* 11:1-11, above), now show that they have not forgotten his assistance.

he had fallen; and I took the crown which was on his head and the armlet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."[58]

11 Then David took hold of his clothes, and rent them; and so did all the
12 men who were with him; and they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD
13 and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?"
14 And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite." David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to
15 destroy the LORD's anointed?" Then David called one of the young men
16 and said, "Go, fall upon him." And he smote him so that he died. And David said to him, "Your blood be upon your head; for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have slain the LORD's anointed.' "

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan
18 his son,[59] and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; (R) behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar.[60] He said:

19 (J) "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen!
20 Tell it not in Gath,
publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;[61]
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

21 "Ye mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor upsurging of the deep!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.[62]

58. Since this account of Saul's death does not seem to agree with that found in the previous section, many scholars believe that the two reports come from different sources. In taking this view they assume that the young man here is telling the truth. It seems more reasonable, however, to assume that the young man is telling a deliberate falsehood: in *claiming* to have killed Saul he hopes to win David's favor. If this is true, there is no real contradiction in the two accounts.

59. The following dirge or elegy is one of the finest in all literature. Scholars generally agree that it must, indeed, have been composed by David shortly before 1000 B.C.; hence, this lament and the Song of Deborah (previously studied) constitute the earliest extant examples of longer Hebrew poems. The nobility of David is effectively revealed: in his expression of genuine sorrow he shows himself to be entirely free from jealousy or self-seeking. (In some places the meaning is not entirely clear due to errors made during transmission.)

60. This comment (R) was probably a marginal insertion later included in the text. The "Book of Jashar" (or the "Book of the Upright," or the "Book of the Heroes") was obviously an early collection of poetry.

61. Gath and Ashkelon were Philistine cities.

62. Some critics believe that the word "not" should be omitted here.

22 "From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan turned not back,
and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

24 "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you daintily in scarlet,
who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 "How are the mighty fallen
in the midst of the battle!

"Jonathan lies slain upon thy high places.
26 I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
very pleasant have you been to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

27 "How are the mighty fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!"[63]

63. Consider Saul's life and activity as a whole, noting his accomplishments (in regard to his own nation and also the Philistines), and observing his weaknesses. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, his life reveals numerous conflicts and contradictions. Samuel and the writer of these accounts seem to have blamed him for his actions; David's verdict is far more favorable. Was his mind so disordered that he was not entirely responsible for all that he did? There may well be differences of opinion at this point. One writer concludes that we "must be content to leave him an enigma" (James, *Personalities of the Old Testament*).

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITED KINGDOM—THE REIGN OF DAVID

Of all the kings of Israel (united or divided) David occupies the position of greatest prominence. It was during his reign (c. 1013-c. 973 B.C.) that the Hebrews really achieved national unity and strength. Under Saul, it is true, the nation began to take form, but it was David who finally established a government that was truly effective. He succeeded in subduing the surrounding enemies. He took the city of Jerusalem, a stronghold which had withstood the Hebrews during the reign of Saul, and made it not only the capital of the nation but also the symbol of all the people's achievements and aspirations, political and religious alike. After the time of David it was at Jerusalem that Jahweh was thought to dwell; to David must be traced the idea of that place as the Holy City. During the reign of David, also, the boundries of the nation were extended to their farthest limits.

As a ruler David came to be looked upon as the ideal king. It is true that at times he performed acts which were far from perfect, but as time passed these appeared to be comparatively insignificant in contrast to the deeds of other kings and in the light of the generally superior character of his reign. He came to be regarded as one who was peculiarly faithful to Jahweh and as one who enjoyed uniquely the divine favor.

Since to later Hebrews the rule of David appeared as the "golden age" of the nation, it is not surprising that in subsequent difficult times the people nurtured the hope for a return of his dynasty. This "Messianic hope" will be seen and discussed in following chapters.

Of course David's qualities as a man are closely related to those which he revealed as a king. There are others, however, which should also be noted. Mention should be made especially, perhaps, of his interest in music and poetry, and it is possible that some of the Psalms which we now have do come from him. (But just as all laws were later ascribed to Moses, so also the book of *Psalms* came to be associated with David's name, although at best, of course, only very few can in any way now be attributed to him.)

Most of our information concerning the reign of David is to be found in *II Samuel,* although some material appears also in the first two chapters of *I Kings.*

DAVID BECOMES KING OF JUDAH

II Samuel 2:1-4a, 8-11

2:1 (J) After this David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go up into any of
the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "To
2 which shall I go up?" And he said, "To Hebron." So David went up
there, and his two wives also, Ahino-am of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow
3 of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him,
every one with his household; and they dwelt in the towns of Hebron.
4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the
house of Judah. . . .

8 Now Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-
9 bosheth the son of Saul,[1] and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead (R) and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Eph-
10 raim and Benjamin and all Israel. Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. (J) But
11 the house of Judah followed David. (R) And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL AND CAPTURES JERUSALEM—II Samuel 3:1; 5:1-12

3:1 (J) There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

5:1 (J) Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron,[2] and said,
2 "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you that led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince
3 over Israel.' " So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and
4 they anointed David king over Israel. (R) David was thirty years old when
5 he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.
6 (J) And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off"[3]— (R) thinking, "David
7 cannot come in here." (J) Nevertheless David took the stronghold of
8 Zion,[4] (R) that is, the city of David. (J) And David said on that day, "Whoever would smite the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft[5] (R) to attack the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul." There-

1. The name Ish-bosheth ("man of shame") displaces here the real name, Ish-baal ("man of baal") because of the editor's dislike for the word "baal."

2. In omitted material it is stated that both Abner and Ish-baal (Ish-bosheth) are killed, contrary to David's wishes.

3. Perhaps something like the following is meant, as a taunt: "The city has such strong natural fortifications that even 'the blind and the lame' can defend it against you; strong men are not needed."

4. "Zion" is one of the hills upon which the city is built. In later times "Zion" was used as a synonym for Jerusalem.

5. This suggests that the city was successfully attacked through a shaft or tunnel which led to a spring. The tunnel had been cut through the rock by the inhabitants of the city so that through it they could secure water in times of siege.

fore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."
9 (J) And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David.
10 And David built the city round about from the Millo inward.[6] And David
became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.
11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also
12 carpenters and masons who built David a house. And David perceived
that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had ex-
alted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.[7]

THE ARK IS BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

II Samuel 6:1-19

6:1 (J) David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.
2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to
Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, (R) which is called
by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim.
3 (J) And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out
of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio,
4 the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God;
5 and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel
were making merry before the LORD with all their might, with songs and
lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.
6 And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out
his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.[8]
7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote
him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there
8 beside the ark of God.[9] And David was angry because the LORD had broken
9 forth upon Uzzah; (R) and that place is called Perez-uzzah,[10] to this day. (J)
And David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the
10 ark of the LORD come to me?" So David was not willing to take the ark
of the LORD into the city of David; but David took it aside to the house of
11 Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the LORD remained in the house

6. The Millo was probably an elevation at the northern end of the city.

7. This account shows how Jerusalem becomes the new capital of the united kingdom. Notice that this capital is not associated with any one tribe (just as Washington, D.C., is not a part of any state).

8. It has been suggested that this verse should read: "And when they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah slipped against the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen had been dunging."

9. Whether the oxen stumbled and Uzzah attempted to steady the Ark, or whether Uzzah himself slipped and fell against the Ark, fatally injuring his head when he struck the hard threshing-floor, Uzzah's death is regarded as punishment for touching that which was "holy" (i.e. "taboo"; as yet the term "holy" involved no moral idea).

10. That is, "The breach (or breaking) of Uzzah."

of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

12 And it was told King David, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom
13 to the city of David with rejoicing; and when those who bore the ark of
14 the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David danced before the LORD with all his might; (R) and David was girded with
15 a linen ephod.[11] (J) So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the horn.

16 As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and
17 dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and
18 peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the
19 name of the LORD of hosts, and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all people departed, each to his house.[12]

DAVID WISHES TO BUILD A TEMPLE—II Samuel 7:1-17

7:1 (?)[13] Now when the king dwelt in his house, and the LORD had given
2 him rest from all his enemies round about, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells
3 in a tent." And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart; for the LORD is with you."

4,5 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to
6 dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent
7 for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of

11. The "ephod" in this late addition to the text refers to a garment worn by priests in the time of the editor. Earlier the "ephod" was a term referring to an object of some kind, perhaps used as a substitute for the Ark.

12. Just as David, according to the previous account, made Jerusalem the political center of the kingdom, so also, according to this report, he makes Jerusalem the religious center. Thus he seeks to establish complete unity among his people.

13. Scholars do not agree as to the origin of the material found in this section. In any case it was probably written at a fairly late date by an author who idealized David and who was disturbed because David had not built the Temple. He credits David with the *desire* to build a temple, but explains David's failure to carry out the plan as due to God's will, expressed in the play on words seen in verses 11-13. See Note 15.

Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built
8 me a house of cedar?" '[14] Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from
9 following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of
10 the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as
11 formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares
12 to you that the LORD will make you a house.[15] When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your son after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.
13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of
14 his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the
15 stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take my steadfast love from him,
16 as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne
17 shall be established for ever.' " In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.[16]

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA—II Samuel 11:1 - 12:25

11:1 (J) In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent to Joab,[17] and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the
3 roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba,
4 the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" So David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to

14. Nathan, the important prophet during the reign of David, seems to be pictured here as extremely conservative, disapproving innovations in religious practice.

15. This statement constitutes a pun on the word "house." David shall not build a "house" (a temple) for Jahweh, but Jahweh will build a "house" (a dynasty) for David.

16. After this the Biblical account includes a report of David's victories. He subdues the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Amalekites, the Syrians, and others. He thus establishes Hebrew supremacy over a large area.

17. Joab is the general of David's army.

her house. And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, "I
am with child."
So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab
sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab
was doing, and how the people fared, and how the war prospered. Then
David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." And
Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from
the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the
servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told
David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have
you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"
Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel (R) and Judah (J) dwell in
booths;[18] and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in
the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to
lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this
thing."[19] Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and to-
morrow I will let you depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day,
and the next. And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and
drank, so that he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to
lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to
his house.
In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of
Uriah. In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest
fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and
die." And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place
where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came
out and fought with Joab; and some of the servants of David among the
people fell. Uriah the Hittite was slain also. Then Joab sent and told
David all the news about the fighting; and he instructed the messenger,
"When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the
king, then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you
go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from
the wall? (R) Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a
woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, so that he died
at Thebez?[20] (J) Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say,
'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.' "[21]

18. Or, perhaps, "tents."

19. While the armies were engaged in warfare it was unlawful for soldiers to have sexual relationships. Uriah refuses to disobey the law, even when drunk (verse 13). Thus David is foiled in his attempt to make it appear that the child is Uriah's.

20. In *Judges* 9:50 ff. the death of Abimelech is thus described. The meaning intended by the editor is this: "Why did you go so near the wall? You should have known that it was dangerous by remembering what happened to Abimelech.

21. Joab hopes that David will forgive him for his rashness when he hears the news of Uriah's death.

22 So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent
23 him to tell. The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage
over us, and came out against us in the field; but we drove them back to
24 the entrance of the gate. Then the archers shot at your servants from the
wall; some of the king's servants are dead; and your servant Uriah the
25 Hittite is dead also." David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to
Joab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one
and now another; strengthen your attack upon the city, and overthrow it.'
And encourage him."
26 When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she
27 made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was over,
David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and
bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

12:1 And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him,
"There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.
2, 3 The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had
nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought
it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his
morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a
4 daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was
unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer
who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it
5 for the man who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly
kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the
6 man who has done this deserves to die; and he shall restore the lamb
fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."
7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man.[22] Thus says the LORD, the God
of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the
8 hand of Saul; and I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives
into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel (R) and of Judah; (J)
9 and if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have
you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You
have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife
to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites.[23]
10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because
you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be
11 your wife.'[24] Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you

22. Nathan's parable was obviously intended to describe David's treatment of Uriah. In his reaction to the parable (verses 5 and 6) David has convicted himself.

23. That is, David had caused Uriah to be killed by the Ammonites.

24. In this verse the writer represents the later quarrels in David's family as punishment for his sin. The following two verses also reflect the writer's knowledge of subsequent events.

out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight
12 of this sun. For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all
13 Israel, and before the sun.' " David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your
14 sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly
15 scorned the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die." Then Nathan went to his house.

And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it
16 became sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David
17 fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground; but he would
18 not, nor did he eat food with them. On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us; how then can we say to him the child is dead? He
19 may do himself some harm." But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David
20 said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD, and worshiped; he then went to his own house; and when he asked, they set food
21 before him, and he ate. Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while it was alive;
22 but when the child died, you arose and ate food." He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows whether
23 the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."[25]

24 Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And
25 the LORD loved him, and sent a message by Nathan the prophet; so he called his name Jedidiah,[26] because of the LORD.[27]

25. David here seems to think of the child as still existing, in some sense, in Sheol. See Note 5 in Chapter IV.

26. That is, "Beloved of Jahweh."

27. In view of the fact that later Hebrews looked back upon David as the ideal king, it is rather surprising that they preserved this account, which pictures him as selfish and unscrupulous. They would not have included the report in their records unless they were seriously attempting to be truthful and accurate. It is to David's credit, of course, that he admits his wrong conduct and accepts Nathan's rebuke. The story is especially important in suggesting that in David's time there was at least some recognition that God required ethical conduct (not merely ceremonial practices) in the people's worship of Him.

ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST DAVID[28]

II Samuel 15:1-6, 10-15, 30-34

15:1 (J) After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men
2 to run before him. And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate; and when any man had a suit to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him, and say, "From what city are you?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in
3 Israel," Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right;
4 but there is no man deputed by the king to hear you." Absalom said moreover, "O that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a suit
5 or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." And whenever a man came near to do obeisance to him, he would put out his hand, and
6 take hold of him, and kiss him. Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.[29]

10 But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Ab-
11 salom is king at Hebron!' " With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their simplicity, and
12 knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.
13 And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of
14 Israel have gone after Absalom." Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee; or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom; go in haste, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the
15 sword." And the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides." . . .

30 But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered; and all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went.
31 And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said "O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."
32 When David came to the summit, where God was worshiped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon

28. Absalom is David's favorite son.

29. In other words, Absalom secures popularity by pretending to be more interested in the welfare of the people than is David.

33 his head. David said to him, "If you go on with me, you will be a burden
34 to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so now I will be your servant,' then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel."[30]

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM—II Samuel 18:1 - 19:8

18:1 (J) Then David mustered the men who were with him, and set over
2 them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. And David sent forth the army, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the
3 men, "I myself will also go out with you." But the men said, "You shall not go out. For if we flee, they will not care about us. If half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; there-
4 fore it is better that you send us help from the city." The king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thou-
5 sands. And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom."[31] And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom.
6 So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was
7 fought in the forest of Ephraim. And the men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that
8 day, twenty thousand men. The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword.[32]
9 And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between
10 heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an
11 oak." Joab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad
12 to give you ten pieces of silver and a girdle." But the man said to Joab, "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake protect the
13 young man Absalom.' On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you

30. Pretending to follow Absalom, Hushai becomes David's spy, helping to defeat the plans of Ahithophel, one of the leaders in the conspiracy.

31. David's affection for Absalom is here clearly evident.

32. The meaning of this verse is not clear. It has been suggested that there may have been hidden clefts or crevasses into which many persons fell, losing their lives.

14 yourself would have stood aloof."[33] Joab said, "I will not waste time like
this with you." And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them into
15 the heart of Absalom, while he was still alive in the oak.[34] (R?) And ten
young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him,
and killed him.
16 (J) Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursu-
17 ing Israel; for Joab restrained them. And they took Absalom, and threw
him into a great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of
18 stones; and all Israel fled every one to his own home. (R) Now Absalom in
his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar which is in the
King's valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remem-
brance"; he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Ab-
salom's monument to this day.
19 (J) Then said Ahima-az the son of Zadok, "Let me run, and carry tid-
ings to the king that the LORD has delivered him from the power of his
20 enemies." And Joab said to him, "You are not to carry tidings today; you
may carry tidings another day, but today you shall carry no tidings, be-
21 cause the king's son is dead."[35] Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell
the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed before Joab, and ran.
22 Then Ahima-az the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "Come what may,
let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why will you run, my
23 son, seeing that you will have no reward for the tidings?" "Come what
may," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahima-az
ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.
24 Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went
up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and
25 looked, he saw a man running alone. And the watchman called out and
told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there are tidings in his
26 mouth."[36] And he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw an-
other man running; and the watchman called to the gate and said, "See,
another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings tidings."
27 And the watchman said, "I think the running of the foremost is like the
running of Ahima-az the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good
man, and comes with good tidings."
28 Then Ahima-az cried out to the king, "All is well." And he bowed be-

33. The man seems to mean that if he *had* killed Absalom Joab would have done nothing to save him from David's anger.

34. It has been suggested that this sentence may have read originally: "And he grasped three branches with his hand and tore him down from the heart of the oak, and Absalom was still alive when he fell from the oak." Or the following verse may have been added later. Verses 14 and 15 as they now appear do not seem to agree.

35. Joab may mean here that he wishes to save Ahima-az from David's wrath when the latter learns that his command has been disobeyed and Absalom has been killed.

36. The fact that the runner was alone was a good sign. In case of a defeat others would probably be fleeing from the battle with him.

fore the king with his face to the earth, and said, "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against
29 my lord the king." And the king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahima-az answered, "When Joab sent your servant, I saw a
30 great tumult, but I do not know what it was." And the king said, "Turn aside, and stand here." So he turned aside, and stood still.
31 And behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the power
32 of all who rose up against you." The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be
33 like that young man." And the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"
19:1 It was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Ab-
2 salom." So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people; for the people heard that day, "The king is grieving for his son."
3 And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are
4 ashamed when they flee in battle. The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my
5 son!" Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life, and the lives of your sons and your daughters, and the
6 lives of your wives and your concubines, because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you; for today I perceive that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be
7 pleased. Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants; for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night; and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon
8 you from your youth until now." Then the king arose, and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate"; and all the people came before the king.

THE DEATH OF DAVID—I Kings 2:1-4, 10-12

2:1 (J)[37] When David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son,
2 saying, (R)[38] "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and

37. Although this material appears in *I Kings,* it comes in part from the same source as that which is found in *I* and *II Samuel.* The sources for the rest of *Kings* will be discussed in the following chapter.

38. Verses 2-4 clearly indicate the thought of a later time, when the "law of Moses" (in the form of *Deuteronomy,* hence after 621 B.C.) had appeared and was accepted as authoritative.

3 show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking
in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances,
and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may
4 prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the LORD may es-
tablish his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take
heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart
and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a man on the throne of
Israel.' "[39]

10 (J) Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of
11 David. And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he
12 reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. So
Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was
firmly established.[40]

39. David speaks these words to Solomon as the new king of Israel. Adonijah, the oldest living son of David, had previously sought to succeed his father upon the throne; in this he had the support of Joab. Urged by Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Bathsheba, however, David designates Solomon as his successor.

40. See again the introduction to this chapter. In the light of the material which has now been studied do not fail to form an estimate of David's accomplishments as king and to gain a picture of conditions within the kingdom during his reign. In reviewing the qualities and characteristics of David as a man be sure to take into consideration not only the material in this chapter but also that which appears in the chapter dealing with the reign of Saul.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNITED KINGDOM—THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

Solomon was the last of the rulers over the united Hebrew kingdom. During his reign the nation experienced its greatest period of splendor and magnificence. He engaged in extensive building operations, becoming particularly famous for the Temple which he erected at Jerusalem. By intermarriage and other methods he established alliances which forestalled international conflicts. He engaged in a considerable amount of commerce with other countries. He adopted many customs and practices from surrounding peoples. Furthermore, he became the "father" of the so-called "wisdom literature," which will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

But Solomon's magnificence and cosmopolitanism were attained at great cost. In carrying out his building program he impoverished the people by over-taxation and by plans for forced labor. Although his marriages with women of other nations created peaceful international relations, these same marriages turned him from his loyalty to Jahweh to the worship of the gods of those nations; at least he allowed such worship. While he brought the Hebrews into a new relationship with world culture, this very fact tended to undermine the distinctive quality of his people—their sense of unique relationship to God. And though there may have been much value in the "wisdom" ascribed to him, yet even this paved the way for a type of thought which more and more served to develop in men an attitude of self-sufficiency rather than a sense of the supremacy of God.

As Solomon entered upon his reign he revealed, at least according to the writers, a deep humility,—a consciousness of dependence upon God and an earnest desire to serve his people worthily and well. But these qualities soon gave way to a burning personal ambition for splendor and reputation. The splendor and the reputation were attained, but as these increased there were sown the germs of national decay and religious corruption.

The accounts concerning Solomon are found in *I Kings*. The larger part of *I* (and *II*) *Kings* comes from a writer commonly designated as the "Compiler" (c. 600 B.C.), since he made use of numerous previously-written documents. The sources for his report of Solomon included (among others) official court records, Temple records, at least one document praising Solomon's wisdom, and especially a document he calls "The Acts of Solomon." While the Compiler thus reproduces considerable reliable information, he also reflects much of the thought of the period in which he wrote.

The material was re-edited about 550 B.C. by the same person (or persons) who published, at the same time, the books of the Pentateuch (exclusive of P material) and also the books of *Joshua, Judges,* and *Samuel.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE REIGN OF SOLOMON—I Kings 3

3:1 Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt; he took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the

2 wall around Jerusalem. The people were sacrificing at the high places,
however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.
3 Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father;
4 only, he sacrificed and burnt incense at the high places.[1] And the king
went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solo-
5 mon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings upon that altar. At Gibeon
the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask
6 what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great and
steadfast love to thy servant David my father, because he walked before
thee in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward
thee; and thou hast kept for him this great and steadfast love, and hast
7 given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God,
thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I
8 am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.[2] And thy
servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a great
9 people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give thy
servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may
discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this thy great
people?"
10, 11 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to
him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long
life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself un-
12 derstanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your
word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like
13 you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give
you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other
14 king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my
ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David
walked, then I will lengthen your days."
15 And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to
Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and of-
fered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his
servants.[3]
16,17 Then two harlots came to the king, and stood before him. The one

1. At the time when the Compiler wrote, sacrifices were allowed only at the Temple in Jerusalem, and not at the "high places" (local sanctuaries) located in various places throughout the land. He explains Solomon's sacrifice at such a "high place" by stating that the Temple had not yet been built.

2. In this Solomon is not referring to his age but to his inexperience. He thus seems to begin his reign with an attitude of deep humility before God.

3. This account of Solomon's choice is intended by the Compiler to show that the king possessed, at least at the beginning of his reign, a very real sense of his responsibility and a deep desire to become a worthy ruler. We shall see, however, that personal ambitions presently begin to occupy his attention. The story which follows immediately is introduced as an illustration of the wisdom for which he becomes famous.

woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house;
18 and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. Then on the third
day after I was delivered, this woman also gave birth; and we were alone;
there was no one else with us in the house, only we two were in the
19 house. And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it.
20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while your
maidservant slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my
21 bosom. When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, it was
dead; but when I looked at it closely in the morning, behold, it was not
22 the child that I had borne." But the other woman said, "No, the living
child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead
child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the
king.

23 Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and
your son is dead'; and the other says, 'No; but your son is dead, and my
24 son is the living one.' " And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a
25 sword was brought before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living
26 child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other." Then the
woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned
for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means
slay it." But the other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it."
27 Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first
28 woman, and by no means slay it; she is its mother."[4] And all Israel heard
of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of
the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to
render justice.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM—I Kings 4:20-34

4:20 Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea; they ate and
21 drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the
Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they
brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

22 Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures[5] of fine flour, and
23 sixty measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, a hun-
24 dred sheep, besides harts, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.[6] For he had
dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphsah to Gaza,

4. It is obvious that the child is given, not to the last speaker, but to the woman who preferred to see it taken from her rather than be killed. By showing the greater affection for it she proved herself to be the real mother.

5. The words used here suggest an amount equal to about 330 bushels.

6. It has been estimated that these supplies would provide for the needs of from 33,000 to 36,000 persons. (Originally verses 22 and 23 probably followed verse 28.)

over all the kings west of the Euphrates; and he had peace on all sides
25 round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt in safety, from Dan to
Beer-sheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree,[7] all the days
26 of Solomon. Solomon also had forty thousand stalls of horses for his
27 chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And those officers[8] supplied provisions for King Solomon, and for all who came to King Solomon's table,
28 each one in his month; they let nothing be lacking. Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds they brought to the place where it was required, each according to his charge.

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure,
30 and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the
31 wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol;[9] and his
32 fame was in all the nations round about. He also uttered three thousand
33 proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he
34 spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.[10]

SOLOMON'S PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE—I Kings 5

5:1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram always
2,3 loved David. And Solomon sent word to Hiram, "You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the
4 LORD put them under the soles of his feet.[11] But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune.
5 And so I purpose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as

7. The expression, "to dwell under one's vine and fig tree" is used on various occasions to suggest a condition of happiness and peace.

8. The reference here is to officers named in omitted Biblical material.

9. These must have been men famous for their wisdom, but nothing is known about them.

10. Verses 29-34 constitute a late addition to the text. Solomon's reputation for creating "proverbs" ("wise" sayings) steadily grew. As shall be seen later, the book of *Proverbs* was ascribed to him. Similarly, the *Song of Songs* was claimed to be his composition. Even though these claims are to be questioned, many scholars agree that Solomon was undoubtedly much interested in this type of writing, and he is sometimes called the "father" of wisdom literature (see Chapter XVIII).

11. A different reason for David's not having built the Temple appears in *II Samuel* 7:5-7 (see especially Note 13 in Chapter VIII).

the LORD said to David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set upon your
6 throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.' Now therefore
command that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me;[12] and my servants will
join your servants, and I will pay you for your servants such wages as
you set; for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to
cut timber like the Sidonians."[13]
7 When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and
said, "Blessed be the LORD this day, who has given to David a wise son to
8 be over this great people." And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, "I have
heard the message which you have sent to me; I am ready to do all you
9 desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber. My servants shall bring
it down to the sea from Lebanon; and I will make it into rafts to go by
sea to the place you direct, and I will have them broken up there, and
you shall receive it; and you shall meet my wishes by providing food for
10 my household." So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the timber of
11 cedar and cypress that he desired, while Solomon gave Hiram twenty
thousand cors of wheat[14] as food for his household, and twenty thousand
12 cors of beaten oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. And the LORD
gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him; and there was peace between
Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty.[15]
13 King Solomon raised a levy of forced labor out of all Israel; and the
14 levy numbered thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten
thousand a month in relays; they would be a month in Lebanon and
15 two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the levy. Solomon also
had seventy thousand burden-bearers and eighty thousand hewers of
16 stone in the hill country, besides Solomon's three thousand three hundred
chief officers who were over the work, who had charge of the people who
17 carried on the work. At the king's command, they quarried out great,
costly stones in order to lay the foundation of the house with dressed
18 stones. So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the men of
Gebal[16] did the hewing and prepared the timber and the stone to build
the house.[17]

12. This refers to the Lebanon mountain range, located north of Palestine.

13. That is, the Phoenicians. Tyre and Sidon were the chief cities of Phoenicia.

14. That is, about 220,000 bushels of wheat.

15. Notice the continued emphasis upon Solomon's wisdom, demonstrated (according to the writer) by his successful negotiations.

16. The "men of Gebal" may have been famous workers in stone.

17. This account provides some insight into Solomon's system of organization. It also indicates the extent of his use of forced labor.

The material which follows this account in *I Kings* includes a detailed description both of the Temple and of the Palace which Solomon builds. The Temple is 90 feet long and 30 feet wide and has a porch 30 feet by 15 feet. At one end of the Temple is the Holy of Holies, or inner shrine, 30 feet square. Seven years are required for the erection of the Temple and thirteen for the building of the Palace. The Temple was probably built as a kind of private chapel; only later was it used for public worship.

THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA[18]

I Kings 10:1-13

10:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concern-
2 ing the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon,
3 she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not
4 explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of
5 Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.[19]

6 And she said to the king, "The report was true which I heard in my
7 own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I
8 heard. Happy are your wives! Happy are these your servants, who con-
9 tinually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute
10 justice and righteousness." Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold,[20] and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 Moreover the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood[21] and precious stones.
12 And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day.[22]

13 And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land, with her servants.

18. Sheba was probably located in the southwestern part of Arabia. This story is related in order to illustrate further Solomon's wisdom and splendor.

19. This seems to mean that she is thoroughly amazed.

20. This would be the equivalent of more than $3,000,000, an obvious exaggeration.

21. These are usually identified as sandal-wood trees, noted for their fragrance.

22. Verses 11 and 12 have been misplaced; obviously they do not belong here.

SOLOMON BECOMES UNFAITHFUL—I Kings 11:1-13

11:1 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,[23]
2 from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods";
3 Solomon clung to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses,
4 and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of
5 David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the
6 Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination[24] of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not wholly
7 follow the LORD, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech[25] the abom-
8 ination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.[26] And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.[27]

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,
10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go
11 after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.
12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I
13 will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."[28]

23. It is probable that at least some of these marriages had been arranged for political purposes to insure peaceful international relationships. A large harem would also add to his magnificence.

24. That is, "god." As a foreign deity it is an "abomination."

25. "Milcom" (verse 5) is a form of the name "Molech," which appears here.

26. That is, the Mount of Olives (east of Jerusalem).

27. Some scholars suggest that Solomon allows the worship of these gods (for political reasons) but does not himself participate in that worship. The author, however, seems to believe otherwise (note verses 5 and 6).

28. In this paragraph the late editor represents the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death as punishment for the king's unfaithfulness to Jahweh. Another cause of the division will be seen presently.

THE DEATH OF SOLOMON—I Kings 11:41-43

11:41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wis-
42 dom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?[29] And the
time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.[30]
43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David
his father; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

THE KINGDOM IS DIVIDED—I Kings 12

12:1 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to
2 make him king.[31] And when Jeroboam[32] the son of Nebat heard of it (for
he was still in Egypt, whither he had fled from King Solomon), then Jero-
3 boam returned from Egypt. And they sent and called him; and Jeroboam
4 and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, "Your father
made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your
5 father and his heavy yoke upon us, and we will serve you."[33] He said to
them, "Depart for three days, then come again to me." So the people went
away.
6 Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood
before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you
7 advise me to answer this people?" And they said to him, "If you will be a
servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to
them when you answer them, then they will be your servants for ever."
8 But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel
with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him.
9 And he said to them, "What do you advise that we answer this people who
10 have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put upon us'?" And
the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you
speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy,
but do you lighten it for us'; thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is
11 thicker than my father's loins.[34] And now, whereas my father laid upon

29. For a reference to this book see the introduction to the present chapter.

30. That is, c. 973-933 B.C.

31. Notice that Shechem seems to be the central gathering-place for all the tribes.

32. Jeroboam had attracted Solomon's attention because of his industrious activity and had been made an overseer by the king. In some way, however, Jeroboam had incurred Solomon's displeasure, either because of his personal ambitions or perhaps because he had championed the cause of the laborers against the king. In any case, he fled to Egypt in order to save his life. (The references to Jeroboam in verses 2, 3, and 12, however, did not appear in the original story, but were added later; compare verse 20.)

33. The people are now beginning to revolt against the heavy taxation and forced labor imposed upon them by Solomon.

34. That is, "My strength and severity are greater than my father's."

you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.' "[35]

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as
13 the king said, "Come to me again the third day." And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel which the old men had
14 given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scor-
15 pions." So the king did not hearken to the people; for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfil his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.[36]

16 And when all Israel saw that the king did not hearken to them, the people answered the king,

"What portion have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Look now to your own house, David."

17 So Israel departed to their tents.[37] But Rehoboam reigned over the peo-
18 ple of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his
19 chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the
20 house of David to this day. And when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.[38]

21 When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin,[39] a hundred and eighty thousand

35. This may be only a figure of speech, though some have supposed that the word "scorpions" may refer to some implement of torture.

36. This act of Rehoboam leads all of the tribes except Judah to reject his rule. In omitted material the prophet Ahijah is represented as predicting this division of the kingdom.

37. As people who would have no real share in the benefits of the kingdom, but would suffer oppression in it, they withdraw their loyalty from the "house" (dynasty) of David.

38. The inhabitants of Judah, because of their location, would undoubtedly derive considerable profit from the flow of wealth into Jerusalem. Hence they would not suffer as did those who lived at a distance and who thus received no real benefit from that which they were compelled to give. (Furthermore, in omitted material it is suggested that Judah had been especially favored in regard to taxation.) This may help to explain Judah's continued loyalty. From this time on, the term "Israel" refers to the newly established Northern Kingdom, while "Judah" designates the Southern Kingdom.

39. According to the previous verse only the tribe of Judah constitutes the Southern Kingdom. If this is true, the statement here must mean that, even though the tribe of

chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to restore the kingdom
22 to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came to She-
23 maiah the man of God: "Say to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of
Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of
24 the people, 'Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your
kinsmen the people of Israel. Return every man to his home, for this
thing is from me.' " So they hearkened to the word of the LORD, and went
home again, according to the word of the LORD.
25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and
26 dwelt there; and he went out from there and built Penuel.[40] And Jero-
boam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house
27 of David; if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD
at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord,
to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Reho-
28 boam king of Judah."[41] So the king took counsel, and made two calves
of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long
enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land
29 of Egypt."[42] And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.[43]
30 And this thing became a sin, for the people went to the one at Bethel
31 and to the other as far as Dan. He also made houses on high places, and
appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the
32 Levites.[44] And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the

Benjamin as a whole withdraws, some families in it continue to support Rehoboam. This is not strange since Jerusalem is located so close to the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

40. That is, Jeroboam built two strongholds. Penuel was east of the Jordan.

41. Although Jerusalem is no longer the political center of the Northern Kingdom it has remained the religious center. Jeroboam fears that as long as this is true, and his people continue to have religious contacts with that city, there is danger that they might once again renew their loyalty to Rehoboam. In order to make the break complete he establishes new centers of worship within his own kingdom.

42. Many scholars regard these images simply as representations of Jahweh (suggesting his strength) and not separate gods, since Israel continues to look upon Jahweh as deity. The author of this account, however, considers this form of worship as a "sin" (verse 30), for in his time the use of such objects in worship was condemned. (In earlier periods, including the time of Jeroboam himself, the use of such objects seems to have been allowed as long as they were in some way suggestive of Jahweh; the opposition had been to images which represented supposed *rival* deities. After the Deuteronomic reform (see Chapter XIV)—and hence by the time of the Compiler—there was opposition to *all* images.) Further "sin" is also involved, for the writer, since in his day Jerusalem was thought to be the only proper place for worship (see Note 1 in this Chapter and also Chapter XIV).

43. Important sanctuaries already existed at these places.

44. Another feature of the later Deuteronomic reform was the establishing of the priesthood as an hereditary group (the Levites). From the point of view of the writer, therefore, this action on the part of Jeroboam constituted further "sin."

eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices upon the altar; so he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had
33 made. He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month which he had devised of his own heart;[45] and he ordained a feast for the people of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense.[46]

45. The observance of the feast (of Ingathering) in the "eighth month" is condemned by the writer because, for him, the proper time to observe it was in the seventh month. (The seasons were somewhat earlier in the south, where the writer lived.)

46. This account of the division of the kingdom of Israel reveals the consequences of the type of rule which Solomon exercised over his people. Read again the introduction to this chapter, and evaluate carefully the reign of Solomon in the light of all the material which has been studied.

CHAPTER X

THE PRE-WRITING PROPHETS—ELIJAH AND ELISHA

Elijah and Elisha prepared the way for those prophets of Israel who later revealed the religion of the Old Testament at its best. It was Elijah, especially, who helped to save Hebrew religion from those influences which tended to reduce it to the level of baal-worship as practiced by surrounding peoples. Elijah, more than any other person previously studied, revived that which was best in the religion of Moses and made it possible for the prophets who succeeded him to build upon that foundation a concept of God and of the will of God which at times approached very closely the religious thought of the New Testament.

After the division of the United Kingdom, Israel, in the north, became the stronger nation. The throne passed from one dynasty to another in rather violent fashion. Finally (c. 887 B.C.) the kingdom was entrusted to the former military leader, Omri, who brought it into such a state of prosperity that it became known, according to Assyrian inscriptions, as the "house of Omri." It was he who made Samaria the capital of the nation.

Omri was succeeded by his son Ahab, whose wife was the Phoenician Jezebel. Just as Solomon had erected places of worship for his foreign wives, so also Ahab built for Jezebel a place for the worship of the Phoenician baal, Melkert. Jezebel, however, was not content. She brought into the land many prophets of Melkert and sought to suppress the worship of Jahweh by putting to death His prophets. Many of the prophets fled. The Hebrews as a whole seemed to offer little resistance. It appeared that the worship of Jahweh was doomed.

It was upon this scene that Elijah appeared. There ensued a decisive contest,—Jezebel against Elijah, Baal against Jahweh. The dramatic quality of the struggle is depicted in this chapter. Elijah wins the victory. Jahweh prevails. The religion of Moses is preserved.

But Elijah did more than preserve the outward worship of Jahweh. He seems also to have made important contributions to the developing idea of God. He thought of God less as a nature deity made manifest primarily in the phenomena of nature (see Note 49 in Chapter V and Note 22 in Chapter VI); he seems to have thought of God, rather, in terms of *Spirit,* speaking to men through the "still small voice." He placed new emphasis upon the *ethical* nature of the divine will. And he seems to have regarded Jahweh's activity as extending beyond the borders of Hebrew territory. (In certain other respects, as might be expected, Elijah's ideas were apparently similar to those generally held in his day; his contributions, however, are no less important for this reason.)

It is not surprising that later Hebrews were fascinated by the story of Elijah. As, later, they longed for the establishing of the divine will in all the world, their thoughts turned to him again and again. Even before the time of Jesus they began to look for him to return as the one who would serve as forerunner to the ushering in of the Kingdom of God.

Elisha is portrayed in the Biblical accounts as the friend and follower of Elijah. While he did not seem to make any particularly original contributions of his own, he did take up and carry on the work of his master and teacher. In so doing he helped to make more permanent some of the results of Elijah's activity and thought.

The author ("Compiler"—see the introduction to Chapter IX) of the book of *Kings* derived his information concerning Elijah from a source which was written about 800 B.C. This source, a Biography of Elijah, was based upon tradition which combined historical fact with legendary additions. The presence of such legendary additions might well be expected, for all peoples are inclined to create tales and anecdotes about those heroes whose deeds have appealed to popular fancy and imagination. The historicity of Elijah, however, cannot be doubted. The very survival of Jahweh-worship in Israel bears ample testimony to his life and activity. And it would never have occurred to men to insert elements of a legendary sort had not the impression of Elijah's personality upon them been exceedingly profound. As literature these stories are some of the best to be found in the Old Testament. The stories concerning Elisha the Compiler derived chiefly from a Biography of Elisha (not unlike the Biography of Elijah, mentioned above).

AHAB BECOMES KING—I Kings 16:29-34

16:29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel
30 in Samaria twenty-two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the
31 sight of the LORD more than all that were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,[1] he took for wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Si-
32 donians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. He erected an
33 altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made an Asherah.[2] Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel,
34 to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho; he laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.[3]

ELIJAH AT THE BROOK CHERITH—I Kings 17:1-7

17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither
2 dew nor rain these years, except by my word."[4] And the word of the LORD
3 came to him, "Depart from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself

1. The reference here is to the "sins" ascribed to Jeroboam in the last section of the previous chapter. See there especially *I Kings* 12:28-33 and Notes 42, 44, and 45.

2. See Note 72 in Chapter V, Note 44 in Chapter VI, and Note 56 in Chapter VII.

3. This may be a reference to a revival of human sacrifice (see Note 16 in Chapter II and Note 53 in Chapter VI). If so, the information is introduced here as illustrating the evils existing in the time of Ahab. (See also *Joshua* 6:26 in Chapter VI.)

4. In the ancient world the absence of rain was regarded as one of the surest indications of deity's displeasure. Secular history verifies this report of a famine during the reign of Ahab.

4 by the brook Cherith, that is east of the Jordan.[5] You shall drink from
5 the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he
went and did according to the word of the LORD; he went and dwelt by
6 the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. And the ravens brought him
bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and
7 he drank from the brook. And after a while the brook dried up, because
there was no rain in the land.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

I Kings 17:8-24

17:8,9 Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath,
which belongs to Sidon,[6] and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a
10 widow there to feed you." So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when
he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks;
and he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I
11 may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said,
12 "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the LORD
your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar,
and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that
I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and
13 die." And Elijah said to her, "Fear not; go and do as you have said; but
first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make
14 for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD the God of Israel, 'The
jar of meal shall not be spent, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the
15 day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.' " And she went and did
16 as Elijah said; and she, and he, and her household ate for many days. The
jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the
word of the LORD which he spoke by Elijah.
17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill;
18 and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she
said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have
come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of
19 my son!"[7] And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from
her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged,
20 and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the LORD, "O LORD my
God, hast thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I

5. Apparently Ahab seeks Elijah's arrest, probably because of the prophet's denunciations.

6. Zarephath was located some ten miles south of Sidon in Phoenicia.

7. Note that here, as previously, misfortune is looked upon as the certain indication of (and punishment for) sin.

21 sojourn, by slaying her son?" Then he stretched himself upon the child
three times, and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this child's soul
22 come into him again." And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and
23 the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah
took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the
house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son
24 lives." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of
God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."[8]

ELIJAH MEETS AHAB. THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL—I Kings 18

18:1 After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year,
saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth."
2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in
3 Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now
4 Obadiah revered the LORD greatly; and when Jezebel cut off the prophets
of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in
5 a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)[9] And Ahab said to Obadiah,
"Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys;
perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose
6 some of the animals." So they divided the land between them to pass
through it; Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in
another direction by himself.
7 And as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him; and Obadiah
recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?"
8 And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here.' "
9 And he said, "Wherein have I sinned, that you would give your servant
10 into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? As the LORD your God lives, there is
no nation or kingdom whither my lord has not sent to seek you; and
when they would say, 'He is not here,' he would take an oath of the
11 kingdom or nation, that they had not found you.[10] And now you say,
12 'Go, tell your lord, "Behold, Elijah is here." ' And as soon as I have gone
from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you whither I know not; and
so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me,
13 although I your servant have revered the LORD from my youth. Has it not
been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the

8. The accounts in this section of the material are obviously intended to illustrate Elijah's nearness to God and his possession of divine qualities. Observe that here Jahweh is represented as showing mercy upon persons who are *not* Israelites.

9. Jezebel, in her zeal for Baal-worship, had been persecuting those prophets who dared to offer opposition.

10. That is, Ahab had made the people swear that they had not discovered him.

LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave,
14 and fed them with bread and water? And now you say, 'Go, tell your lord,
15 "Behold, Elijah is here" '; and he will kill me." And Elijah said, "As the
LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him
16 today." So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went
to meet Elijah.
17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of
18 Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and
your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the
19 LORD and followed the Baals. Now therefore send and gather all Israel to
me at Mount Carmel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal
and the four hundred prophets of Asherah,[11] who eat at Jezebel's table."
20 So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel, and gathered the prophets to-
21 gether at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people, and
said, "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the
LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people
22 did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I
only, am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred
23 and fifty men. Let two bulls be given to us; and let them choose one bull
for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no
fire to it; and I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, and
24 put no fire to it. And you call on the name of your god and I will call on the
name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all
25 the people answered, "It is well spoken." Then Elijah said to the prophets
of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are
26 many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it." And they
took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on
the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!"
But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped about the
27 altar which they had made. And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying,
"Cry aloud, for he is a god;[12] either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or
28 he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." And
they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with swords and
29 lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.[13] And as midday passed,

11. The "Asherah," as previously seen, is thought by many scholars to have been some kind of sacred post suggestive of the female counterpart to Baal. In the usage here "Asherah" appears to be employed as the *name* of the female deity (elsewhere named Ashtoreth). This reference to the four hundred prophets of Asherah is probably a later addition to the text, since in verse 22 only the prophets of Baal are mentioned.

12. This, of course, is irony. In reality Elijah is denying that Baal is a god at all; at least he is not a god whose power exists in Israel.

13. This shedding of blood seems to be regarded as a sort of sacrifice intended to win the god's favor.

they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation,[14] but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me"; and all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had
31 been thrown down; Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came,
32 saying, "Israel shall be your name"; and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as
33 great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the
34 wood." And he said, "Do it a second time"; and they did it a second time.
35 And he said, "Do it a third time"; and they did it a third time. And the water ran round about the altar, and filled the trench also with water.[15]

36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I
37 have done all these things at thy word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that thou, O LORD, art God, and that thou
38 hast turned their hearts back." Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and
39 licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD,
40 he is God." And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of
42 the rushing of rain."[16] So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth, and
43 put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked, and said, "There is
44 nothing." And he said, "Go again seven times." And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising out of the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go
45 down, lest the rain stop you.' " And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode

14. That is, late in the day,—at the hour when (in the writer's time) an offering was to be made to God.

15. The water is used to make the burning all the more difficult and to obviate the suspicion that trickery might be employed.

16. Elijah seems to mean that since the people have now returned to Jahweh the rain will no longer be withheld. See Note 4.

46 and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.[17]

ELIJAH AT MOUNT HOREB—I Kings 19:1-18

19:1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all
2 the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your
3 life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."[18] Then he was afraid, and he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree; and he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my
5 fathers." And he lay down and slept under a broom tree; and behold, an
6 angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of
7 water. And he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came again a second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and
8 eat, else the journey will be too great for you." And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.[19]

9 And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here,
10 Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left;
11 and they seek my life, to take it away." And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind
12 an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a
13 still small voice.[20] And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold,

17. Although this account includes various legendary features, it nevertheless reveals the fact that in some way the people's loyalty to Jahweh was restored and the threat of the extinction of Jahweh-worship was overcome.

18. That is, "Let the gods kill me if I do not do to you what you have done to the prophets (of Baal)."

19. That is, Mount Sinai. See Note 14, Chapter V.

20. Here is an important idea. Jahweh appears not so much as the Storm-God, who speaks through thunder, wind, and fire (perhaps lightning), but more nearly as Spirit, touching and strengthening Elijah.

there came a voice to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"
14 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they
15 seek my life, to take it away." And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall
16 anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-
17 meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. And him who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from
18 the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."[21]

THE CALL OF ELISHA—I Kings 19:19-21

19:19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the
20 twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him.[22] And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back
21 again; for what have I done to you?"[23] And he returned from following him, and took the yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate.[24] Then he arose and went after Elijah, and ministered to him.

NABOTH'S VINEYARD—I Kings 21:1-21

21:1 Now Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard in Jezreel, beside the palace
2 of Ahab king of Samaria.[25] And after this Ahab said to Naboth, "Give

21. The "seven thousand" (intended only as a round number) who are to escape will build the new (loyal) Israel. This suggests the later prophetic idea of a "remnant," which will be considered in a subsequent chapter.

This account raises the question as to Elijah's concept of Jahweh's dwelling-place. Since it is at Horeb (Sinai) that he feels especially the divine presence, there seems to be the thought that Jahweh continues to have His particular abode at this place, although His activity extends throughout Israel and even into Phoenicia (recall the account of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath).

22. The "mantle" is here regarded as the symbol of Elijah's prophetic activity. Elisha is thus designated as the prophet's successor.

23. Moffatt translates this command, "Go, but consider what I have done to you."

24. Elisha's actions in this verse are intended to signify his break with his former life and the beginning of his new life and activity.

25. It has been suggested that Ahab had a summer residence in Jezreel although the capital of his kingdom was in Samaria.

me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; and I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems
3 good to you, I will give you its value in money." But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my
4 fathers." And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food.

5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit
6 so vexed that you eat no food?" And he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it please you, I will give you another vineyard for it'; and he
7 answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' " And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who dwelt with Naboth in
9 his city. And she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on
10 high among the people; and set two base fellows opposite him, and let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the
11 king.' Then take him out, and stone him to death." And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters which she had sent to
12 them, they proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.
13 And the two base fellows came in and sat opposite him; and the base fellows brought a charge against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the
14 city, and stoned him to death with stones. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."

15 As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not
16 alive, but dead." And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,
18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold,
19 he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed, and also taken possession?" ' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood." ' "

20 Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in

21 the sight of the LORD. Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel."[26]

ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION[27]—II Kings 2:1-15

2:1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirl-
2 wind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live,
3 I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets[28] who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."
4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you your-
5 self live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."
6 Then Elijah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the LORD has

26. The Biblical account continues with a further prediction of the fate of Ahab's house.

Ahab's original offer to Naboth had, of course, been entirely fair. In allowing Naboth to be killed on the basis of false charges, however, he shows his utterly weak and unscrupulous nature (for Elijah seems to assume that the king was entirely aware of Jezebel's plan). Elijah's fearlessness and sense of justice are obvious. Even more important is Elijah's conviction that Jahweh's will involves the demand for ethical conduct on the part of His people. In Baal-worship no such ethical elements seem to have been involved; it seems to have been precisely for this reason that the threat of Baal-worship was so serious.

At this point may be summarized the concepts of deity ascribed to Elijah in these narratives (the following account adds nothing new in this connection). For Elijah Jahweh is still a God of wrath (suggested in the slaying of the prophets of Baal); He is pleased with sacrifice; and He seems to be regarded as having his particular dwelling place at Mount Sinai (see Note 21). But for Elijah, also, Jahweh's activity is not limited to Mount Sinai or even to the land of Israel (see Note 21); He is regarded as the only true God, at least in Palestine (see Note 12); He appears more nearly as Spirit rather than as a nature deity who manifests Himself primarily in physical phenomena (see Note 20); and He is a God who requires justice and righteousness (as in the story of Naboth's vineyard). Thus Elijah's thinking represents at least some advance in the direction of monotheism, a spiritual concept of deity, and the idea that Jahweh's will is essentially ethical.

27. The word "translation" is here used in the sense of "removal" or "transference." The account is sometimes referred to as "Elijah's Ascension."

28. To be a "son of a prophet" meant simply to belong to the group or band of the prophets (see Note 20 in Chapter VII). The expression had nothing to do with the father's occupation.

sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you
7 yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty
men of the sons of the prophets also went, and stood at some distance
8 from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took
his mantle, and rolled it up, and struck the water, and the water was
parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go
over on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do
for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "I pray you,
10 let me inherit a double share of your spirit."[29] And he said, "You have
asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it
11 shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." And as
they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire
separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into
12 heaven.[30] And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! the
chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces.
13 And he took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went
14 back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of
Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where
is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water,
the water was parted to the one side and to the other;[31] and Elisha
went over.

15 Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him over
against them, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And
they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.[32]

ELISHA AND NAAMAN—II Kings 5

5:1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man
with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given

29. For the customary use of the expression, "double portion," see Note 1 in Chapter III. Here Elisha asks simply that he may be worthy to succeed Elijah, receiving divine power as had his master.

30. The "chariot of fire," etc., are intended to convey the idea of Jahweh's activity and power.

31. This repetition of Elijah's act (see verse 8), together with the fact that he had seen the ascension of Elijah (compare verse 10), are represented as giving proof to Elisha that he is indeed to become his master's successor.

32. The purpose of this story is to express the conviction that Elijah was no ordinary prophet. He did not descend into the general abode of the dead (Sheol), but was worthy to ascend into the very presence of God. Doubt may be expressed concerning the historicity of the event, but the idea which is being proclaimed in this way is clear.

victory to Syria.[33] He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.
2 Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little maid
3 from the land of Israel, and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in
4 Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the maiden from the land of Israel."
5 And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand
6 shekels of gold, and ten festal garments. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of
7 his leprosy." And when the king of Israel read the letter, he rent his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you rent your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a
9 prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and
10 halted at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh
11 shall be restored, and you shall be clean." But Naaman was angry, and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his
12 hand over the place, and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a
13 rage. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be
14 clean'?" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15 Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him; and he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from
16 your servant." But he said, "As the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will
17 receive none." And he urged him to take it, but he refused. Then Naaman said, "If not, I pray you, let there be given to your servant

33. The reference to Syria's "victory" as due to Jahweh reflects the *later* idea that Jahweh was One who controlled the destiny of other nations as well as of Israel. (For the idea of God in Elisha's time see Note 34).

two mules' burden of earth; for henceforth your servant will not offer
18 burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD.[34] In this matter
may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house
of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in
the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the
19 LORD pardon your servant in this matter."[35] He said to him, "Go in
peace."

20 But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, Gehazi, the
servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "See, my master has spared this
Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As
21 the LORD lives, I will run after him, and get something from him." So
Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw some one running after
him, he alighted from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?"
22 And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me to say, 'There have
just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of
the sons of the prophets; pray, give them a talent of silver and two
23 festal garments.' " And Naaman said, "Be pleased to accept two talents."
And he urged him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with
two festal garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they
24 carried them before Gehazi. And when he came to the hill, he took
them from their hand, and put them in the house; and he sent the men
25 away, and they departed. He went in, and stood before his master, and
Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your
26 servant went nowhere." But he said to him, "Did I not go with you in
spirit when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a
time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep
27 and oxen, menservants and maidservants? Therefore the leprosy of
Naaman shall cleave to you, and to your descendants for ever." So he
went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.[36]

34. This verse is important, for it shows clearly the (then) current idea that the activity of a nation's God was limited to the territory of that nation and that He could be worshiped only on that nation's soil; hence Naaman wishes to take some of Israel's soil with him.

35. Naaman means here that as a servant of the king of Syria he will be compelled to bow as in worship before the Syrian god. In his own mind, however, he will be true to Jahweh in spite of his outward gesture.

36. Although Gehazi is described as being thus punished for his avarice and falsehood, he is portrayed later (in *II Kings* 8:4) as though entirely well.

In the account which follows in *II Kings,* Elisha anoints Jehu to be king of Israel (after two sons of Ahab had occupied the throne). Jehu kills all of the family of Ahab, including Jezebel, who is thrown down from the wall into the street and trampled to death. During a period of bloody persecution and butchery Baal-worship is abolished.

CHAPTER XI

AMOS (c. 750 B.C.)

In this chapter we are introduced to the first of the so-called "writing prophets," those men who represent Hebrew religion at its best. In the history of all the world no single group of men has contributed more to religious thought than did they. They purified and developed the idea of God and of His will until they arrived at a concept of deity closely akin, at many points, to the thought of Jesus himself.

The word "prophet" comes from the Greek and means "one who speaks for, or in behalf of another." As the term is used here it refers to one who speaks for, or in behalf of Jahweh (God). Unfortunately it has, in our day, become associated frequently with the idea of foretelling or prediction. It is true that the prophets did, from time to time, announce the approach of doom and destruction—and sometimes the possibility of future blessings. The will of God being what it is, they asserted, the consequences of conduct *can* be anticipated as that conduct deviates from—or conforms to—the divine will. But this is quite different from prediction based on a supposed revelation of a kind of unalterable blueprint of things to come. The purpose of the prophets was not to foretell the future according to such a fixed blueprint, but rather to warn men that the only way to avoid the threatened disaster—or to receive the blessings—is for them to bring their conduct into harmony with God's claims upon them. The chief function of the prophets, therefore, was to proclaim the will of God as they saw it and to urge obedience.

Amos was the first of these prophets whose utterances have been preserved in writing. In the Bible he is classified as one of the Minor Prophets. This does not mean that he is therefore of less importance than some of the others, but only that his recorded prophecies are comparatively brief and hence could be included, with eleven other documents, in a single volume or scroll, called the *Book of the Twelve* (the last twelve "books" of the present Old Testament).

The home of Amos was in the Southern Kingdom (Judah), in Tekoa, a place situated some ten miles south of Jerusalem. His prophetic activity, however, took place in Israel. It has been supposed that as a herdsman he may have made yearly journeys into the kingdom to the north in order to sell the wool from his sheep in such cities as Bethel, Gilgal, and Samaria. There he witnessed those conditions which compelled him to speak.

At this time the king of Israel was Jeroboam II, the third ruler of the nation after Jehu. Uzziah was king of Judah. The northern kingdom was by far the stronger and more prosperous. This strength and prosperity increased under Jeroboam. Assyria, beginning a period of conquest, had weakened the power of the Syrians, but had not yet followed up her attacks. Jeroboam, taking advantage of the fact that the attention of Syria was now diverted eastward, seized the opportunity to defeat the Syrians of Damascus and to conquer much of the territory east of the Jordan. As a result the kingdom of Israel enjoyed the pride of victory and the accompanying wealth and luxury. The wealth and luxury, however, were not shared by all. The rich became very rich as they increasingly oppressed the poor, and the poor steadily became poorer. Bribery abounded in the courts, so that the peasants had no opportunity to defend their rights and to save what property they had possessed. Furthermore, although Jahweh was indeed worshiped with elaborate ceremony and sacrifice, this worship assumed, more and more, the forms of Baal-worship, including practices that were definitely immoral.

Amos saw all of this, and he was horrified by it. The evils no doubt seemed all the greater to him as they appeared in contrast to the simple and sternly religious life to

which he had been accustomed. He began his prophetic activity, therefore, with the most severe denunciations. He startled the people with his bold assertions that Jahweh is, above all, a God of justice and righteousness, a God before whom ceremony and sacrifice are highly distasteful when practiced by men who participate in the evils of the time. Jahweh has blessed Israel, he says, above "all the families of the earth." This does not mean that Israel is therefore to enjoy special privilege; it means, rather, that Israel has special responsibilities. If the people believe that they shall be spared because they are a chosen nation they are sadly mistaken, for they shall be judged on the basis of their conduct and their obedience to the ethical will of God.

Thus Amos was primarily a prophet of justice and righteousness. For him Jahweh was primarily a God of justice and righteousness. Earlier Hebrews had represented Jahweh as a God of moral and ethical requirements, but it was Amos who first made this attribute of deity predominant and supreme.

Amos also appears to be the first of the Hebrews to express explicitly the conviction that Jahweh's power extends over the nations surrounding Israel (Elijah's thought in this regard is much less clear—see Notes 21 and 26 in Chapter X); His activity and judgments reach beyond Israel's borders. Since Amos does not specifically deny the existence of other gods, we are not able to designate him as monotheistic in his thinking; but at least he represents a broader kind of henotheism (see Note 55 in Chapter V) than has yet appeared.

Of particular interest in connection with Amos is his vivid and picturesque language. His figures of speech are some of the most striking in the entire Old Testament. There is also a dramatic quality in his utterances which is worthy of special notice.

On the whole the utterances of Amos are expressed in poetic form. (Earlier translations generally have failed to indicate this fact.) It is well to observe, therefore, one of the fundamental characteristics of Hebrew poetry. This is known as *parallelism*. It will be noted that the various lines are usually grouped in pairs, the two lines in each pair being closely related to each other. Frequently the second line repeats, with different words, exactly the same thought expressed in the first line. For example:

"The LORD roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from Jerusalem."

This form is commonly designated as *synonymous* parallelism. A second type is that in which a contrast is indicated in the two lines:

"Seek me and live;
but do not seek Bethel."

This is known as *antithetical* parallelism (less common in *Amos*). A third form is that in which the second line supplements the first:

"Do two walk together,
unless they have made an appointment?"

This type is called *synthetic* or *constructive* parallelism.

For the most part the book of Amos reports the genuine words of the prophet. Only a few additions may be ascribed to later editors. The more important additions will be indicated in the footnotes.

THE INTRODUCTION—Amos 1:1-2

1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before
2 the earthquake.[1] And he said:

1. For reference to the kings named here see the introduction to this chapter. A severe earthquake must have occurred during the reign of Uzziah, for it is mentioned centuries later by the writer of *Zechariah* 14:5.

"The LORD roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds mourn,
and the top of Carmel withers."[2]

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CALL OF AMOS[3]

Amos 7:10-17

7:10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel,
saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of
11 Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said,

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.' "

12 And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah,
13 and eat bread there, and prophesy there;[4] but never again prophesy at
Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."
14 Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son;[5]
15 but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees,[6] and the LORD
took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy
to my people Israel.'

16 "Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
and do not preach against the house of Isaac.'
17 Therefore thus says the LORD:
'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city,
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword,

2. These four lines introduce the prophecies of Amos. Verse 1 is the editor's introduction.

3. The incident described by the editor here occurred after Amos had uttered most (if not all) of his prophecies and had announced that doom would befall the nation (in part, probably, at the hand of the Assyrians) because of its sins. The material is introduced at this point because it provides most of our information concerning the man Amos, and also because it includes a report concerning the beginning of his prophetic activity.

4. That is, "Go back to your home,—in Judah."

5. Amos denies that he has ever been a professional prophet—one of the "sons of the prophets" of the type previously known. (See Note 20 in Chapter VII and Note 28 in Chapter X.) From our point of view, of course, he was a true prophet as the term is now used (see the introduction to this chapter). For the editor's use of the word "seer" in verse 12, see Note 15 in Chapter VII.

6. As a "herdsman" Amos had raised sheep. As a "dresser of sycamore trees" he had tended what was probably a type of fig tree, nipping the fruit at the proper season in order to hasten its ripening.

and your land shall be parceled out by line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land.' "

A SERIES OF JUDGMENTS AGAINST VARIOUS PEOPLES[7]

Amos 1:3 - 2:16

1:3 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Damascus,[8]
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they have threshed Gilead
with threshing sledges of iron.[9]
4 So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael,
and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad.[10]
5 I will break the bar of Damascus,
and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven,
and him that holds the scepter from Beth-eden;
and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir,"
says the LORD.
6 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Gaza,[11]
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they carried into exile a whole people
to deliver them up to Edom.[12]
7 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,
and it shall devour her strongholds.
8 I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod,

7. In the first part of the prophecy given here Amos pronounces doom upon Israel's enemies. Try to imagine the pleasure which his hearers would derive from these first announcements. The repeated use of the expression, "For three transgressions . . . and for four," is seen as important when the symbolism of numbers is taken into account. Three was a number suggesting completeness; "four" would mean *more* than enough to deserve destruction. (Or, adding, the sum is seven,—also a frequently-used symbol of completeness.)

8. That is, Syria.

9. The Syrians had dealt with the people of northern Israel as ruthlessly as threshing instruments tear at the grain, and had "made them like the dust at threshing" *(II Kings* 13:7).

10. Hazael and his son, Ben-hadad III, were Syrian kings.

11. That is, the Philistines. Gaza and the places mentioned in verse 8 were Philistine cities.

12. This means that the Philistines had sold Hebrew captives to the Edomites as slaves.

13. When the Hebrew text reads "Jahweh," the word LORD (in capital letters) is usually given in this translation (see the Foreword to this text and also the introduction to Chapter I). When the Hebrew text reads "Lord Jahweh," however, the "Jahweh" is reproduced as GOD (again in capital letters) to avoid the duplication of "Lord LORD."

and him that holds the scepter from Ashkelon;
I will turn my hand against Ekron;
and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,"
says the Lord GOD.[13]

9 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Tyre,[14]
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they delivered up a whole people to Edom,
and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.
10 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,
and it shall devour her strongholds."

11 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Edom,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because he pursued his brother[15] with the sword,
and cast off all pity,
and his anger tore perpetually,
and he kept his wrath for ever.
12 So I will send a fire upon Teman,
and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah."[16]

13 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of the Ammonites,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they have ripped up women with child in Gilead,
that they might enlarge their border.
14 So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,
and it shall devour her strongholds,
with shouting in the day of battle,
with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind;[17]
15 and their king shall go into exile,
he and his princes together,"
says the LORD.

2:1 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Moab,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because he burned to lime

14. That is, the Phoenicians.
15. This refers to the fact that Esau (Edom), as reported in *Genesis*, was regarded as the brother of Israel (Jacob). Hence here the Edomites are called "brother" to the Israelites.
16. Verses 9-12 are regarded by some scholars as editorial additions.
17. This is a figure of speech suggesting the nature of the attack.

the bones of the king of Edom.[18]
2 So I will send a fire upon Moab,
and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth,
and Moab shall die amid uproar,
amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet;
3 I will cut off the ruler from its midst,
and will slay all its princes with him,"
says the LORD.

4 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Judah,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they have rejected the law of the LORD,
and have not kept his statutes,
but their lies have led them astray,
after which their fathers walked.
5 So I will send a fire upon Judah,
and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem."[19]

6 Thus says the LORD:
"For three transgressions of Israel,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of shoes—[20]
7 they that trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth,
and turn aside the way of the afflicted;
a man and his father go in to the same maiden,
so that my holy name is profaned;[21]
8 they lay themselves down beside every altar
upon garments taken in pledge;[22]
and in the house of their God they drink
the wine of those who have been fined.[23]

18. To dishonor the dead was regarded as particularly evil.

19. This paragraph is thought by many scholars to be an editorial addition. Amos himself is usually more specific in his charges.

Thus far Amos has denounced Israel's enemies. His hearers are undoubtedly worked up to a high pitch of excited anticipation. But now, suddenly, the blow falls upon Israel herself. Try to imagine the surprise and indignation which these words would create.

20. This seems to mean that the rich would sell a man into slavery as though he were of almost no value. The meaning may be, however, that an innocent man is "sold" (given an unjust verdict) in the courts for a very small bribe.

21. This refers to the practice of sacred prostitution, an institution taken over in some measure from Baal-worship with its interest in fertility.

22. Garments taken from the poor as pledges (for debt) were supposed to be returned at night *(Exodus* 22:25-27), for in many cases they were a man's only protection.

23. That is, money received from fines (justly or unjustly imposed) is spent in self-indulgence.

9 "Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them,
whose height was like the height of the cedars,
and who was as strong as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit above,
and his roots beneath.[24]
10 Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt,
and led you forty years in the wilderness,
to possess the land of the Amorite.
11 And I raised up some of your sons for prophets,
and some of your young men for Nazirites.[25]
Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?"

says the LORD.

12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine,[26]
and commanded the prophets,
saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'[27]

13 "Behold, I will press you down in your place,
as a cart full of sheaves presses down.
14 Flight shall perish from the swift,
and the strong shall not retain his strength,
nor shall the mighty save his life;
15 he who handles the bow shall not stand,
and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself,
nor shall he who rides the horse save his life;
16 and he who is stout of heart among the mighty
shall flee away naked in that day,"

says the LORD.[28]

24. Amos is saying in this paragraph that Jahweh has shown Israel special favor by destroying her enemies, etc. ("Amorite" is used to designate in general the earlier inhabitants of Canaan.)

25. For the meaning of the term "Nazirites" see Note 55 in Chapter VI. It may be added here that one of the Nazirite vows was to avoid the use of wine, since wine was closely associated with Baal-worship. The Nazirite movement attempted to resist the influences of Baal-worship by opposing the adoption of various Canaanite customs and practices.

26. That is, the Nazirites had been induced to break their pledge of abstinence.

27. The Israelites are so completely given to their evil ways that they will tolerate no prophetic criticism or admonition.

28. In this section Amos thus declares that although Israel has been especially favored by Jahweh, her people's sins are exceedingly great. For such sins punishment and destruction are inevitable. The enlarging concept as to the extent of Jahweh's power is here clearly evident: Israel's God can bring punishment upon other nations as well. Amos does not, however, deny the existence of other gods.

THREE ADDRESSES OF DENUNCIATION[29]—Amos 3–6

First Address

3:1 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt:

2 "You only have I known
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities.[30]

3 "Do two walk together,
unless they have made an appointment?
4 Does a lion roar in the forest,
when he has no prey?
Does a young lion cry out from his den,
if he has taken nothing?
5 Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth,
when there is no trap for it?
Does a snare spring up from the ground,
when it has taken nothing?
6 Is a trumpet blown in a city,
and the people are not afraid?
Does evil befall a city,
unless the LORD has done it?
7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
without revealing his secret
to his servants the prophets.
8 The lion has roared;
who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken;
who can but prophesy?"

9 Proclaim to the strongholds in Assyria,

29. The theme in each of these addresses may be stated thus: A sinful nation must be punished. Notice that each of the addresses is introduced with the same expression: "Hear this word. . . ."

30. Amos here seems to accept the idea of Israel as a "chosen people." This does not mean that Israel is to enjoy special privilege, however; it means, rather, that she is all the more guilty and deserving of punishment because her responsibilities are greater.

In the following verses (3-8) Amos pauses in his denunciation to justify his right to prophesy. Jahweh has spoken; *therefore* he (Amos) must speak (see verse 8). It is a matter of cause and effect. Just as, in the numerous illustrations which he now gives, every effect is due to a cause, so his utterances (the effect) are traced to Jahweh (the cause). In other words, a divine cause compels him to speak.

and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt,
and say, "Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria,
and see the great tumults within her,
and the oppressions in her midst."[31]
10 "They do not know how to do right," says the LORD,
"those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds."
11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"An adversary shall surround the land,
and bring down your defences from you,
and your strongholds shall be plundered."

12 Thus says the LORD: "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed."[32]

13 "Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob,"
says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,
14 "that on the day I punish Israel for his transgressions,
I will punish the altars of Bethel,
and the horns of the altar shall be cut off
and fall to the ground.[33]
15 I will smite the winter house with the summer house;
and the houses of ivory shall perish,
and the great houses shall come to an end,"

says the LORD.

Second Address

4:1 "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan,[34]
who are in the mountain of Samaria,
who oppress the poor, who crush the needy,
who say to their husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'
2 The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness
that, behold, the days are coming upon you,
when they shall take you away with hooks,

31. Amos means here that even the heathen would condemn the evils committed in Samaria if they were to come and look upon that city.

32. Verse 12 includes one of Amos' most vivid illustrations. The prophet means that when punishment comes only a very small remnant of the people shall be saved (as much as may be compared with a couple of lamb's legs or a piece of an ear.)

33. The "horns of the altar" were projections on which was smeared the blood of sacrificed animals.

34. The pampered women of Samaria are likened to the fat cattle of Bashan (a district near the Sea of Galilee).

even the last of you with fishhooks.[35]
3 And you shall go out through the breaches,[36]
every one straight before her;
and you shall be cast forth into Harmon,"[37]

says the LORD.

4 "Come to Bethel, and transgress;
to Gilgal, and multiply transgression;
bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three days;
5 offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened,
and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them;
for so you love to do, O people of Israel!"

says the Lord GOD.[38]

6 "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,[39]
and lack of bread in all your places,
yet you did not return to me,"

says the LORD.

7 "And I also withheld the rain from you
when there were yet three months to the harvest;
I would send rain upon one city,
and send no rain upon another city;
one field would be rained upon,
and the field on which it did not rain withered;
8 so two or three cities wandered to one city
to drink water, and were not satisfield;
yet you did not return to me,"

says the LORD.

9 "I smote you with blight and mildew;
I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards;
your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured;
yet you did not return to me,"

says the LORD.

10 "I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt;
I slew your young men with the sword;

35. The Assyrians are known to have led away captives with "hooks" or rings through their lips.

36. That is, through the breaks made in the wall by the attackers.

37. The meaning of this last expression is not known.

38. The words in this paragraph are uttered as irony or sarcasm. The people delight in outward show of piety at the sanctuaries of Bethel and Gilgal although their conduct is evil.

39. They have had "cleanness of teeth" because of the lack of food (due to famine). In verses 6-11 it is meant that Jahweh has tried to warn them by bringing hardships and suffering upon them, but they have refused to heed the warnings. Therefore (verse 12) they must expect even greater punishment.

I carried away your horses;
and I made the stench of your camp[40] go up into your nostrils;
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

11 "I overthrew some of you,
as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning;[41]
yet you did not return to me,"
says the LORD.

12 "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel;
because I will do this to you,
prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

13 For lo, he who forms the mountains, and creates the wind,
and declares to men what is his thought;
who makes the morning darkness,
and treads on the heights of the earth—
the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name![42]

Third Address

5:1 Hear this word which I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:[43]

2 "Fallen, no more to rise,
is the virgin Israel;
forsaken on her land,
with none to raise her up."

3 For thus says the Lord GOD:
"The city that went forth a thousand
shall have a hundred left,
and that which went forth a hundred
shall have ten left
to the house of Israel."

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:
"Seek me and live;
5 but do not seek Bethel,

40. That is, the "stench" of the unburied dead.

41. That is, they have barely escaped destruction already.

42. Scholars generally regard verse 13 (a so-called "nature passage") as an editorial addition to the text, for it seems to be out of place here and also reflects later thought.

43. Amos now attempts to awaken Israel to a sense of impending doom by chanting a solemn dirge, as though the nation is already dead. Israel is pictured as a young girl.

and do not enter into Gilgal
or cross over to Beer-sheba;
for Gilgal shall surely go into exile,
and Bethel shall come to nought."[44]

6 Seek the LORD and live,
lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,[45]
and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,
7 O you who turn justice to wormwood,[46]
and cast down righteousness to the earth!

8 He who made the Pleiades and Orion,
and turns deep darkness into the morning,
and darkens the day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out upon the surface of the earth,
the LORD is his name,
9 who makes destruction flash forth against the strong,
so that destruction comes upon the fortress.[47]

10 They hate him who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor him who speaks the truth.
11 Therefore because you trample upon the poor
and take from him exactions of wheat,[48]
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
12 For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and turn aside the needy in the gate.
13 Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.[49]

14 Seek good, and not evil,
that you may live;

44. That is, the worship in these places is futile; Israel must return to Jahweh and to His ethical will.

45. The tribe of Ephraim (Ephraim was the son of Joseph) occupied a central position in the Northern Kingdom.

46. "Wormwood" (a bitter plant) is used here to suggest bitter things.

47. Verses 8-9 constitute another of the late "nature passages" (see Note 42).

48. This means that the demands upon the poor have been exorbitant.

49. The times are so evil that those who are "prudent" will not *dare* to protest.

and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
as you have said.[50]
15 Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.[51]

16 Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord:
"In all the squares there shall be wailing;
and in all the streets they shall say, 'Alas! alas!'
They shall call the farmers to mourning
and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,
17 and in all vineyards there shall be wailing,
for I will pass through the midst of you,"
says the LORD.[52]
18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!
Why would you have the day of the LORD?
It is darkness, and not light;[53]
19 as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him;
or went into the house and leaned with his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.[54]
20 Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

21 "I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings,
I will not accept them,
and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts
I will not look upon.

50. Or, "as you *think* He is with you."

51. Since the element of hope in verses 14-15 interrupts the general message of doom, it is thought by some that these words may have been inserted later as a misplaced elaboration of the thought in verse 4.

52. "Pass through" suggests the passing through Egypt (at the time of the Exodus), when the first-born of the Egyptians were killed.

53. Presumptuously thinking of themselves as the "chosen people," the Hebrews were looking forward to the "Day of Jahweh," when God would reveal Himself, destroy all their enemies, and raise Israel to a position of supremacy and glory. Amos here condemns this view, saying that when the Day of Jahweh arrives God will not show the expected favoritism, but will destroy those who are evil in Israel as well as those of other nations. It will be a time of "darkness," not of "light."

54. That is, to try to flee from punishment in the Day of Jahweh would be like escaping one peril only to encounter another. The punishment will be certain.

23 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
24 But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.[55]

25 "Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in
26 the wilderness, O house of Israel?[56] You shall take up Sakkuth your
king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images, which you made for
27 yourselves;[57] therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus,"[58]
says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.[59]

6:1 "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion,
and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria,
the notable men of the first of the nations,
to whom the house of Israel come!
2 Pass over to Calneh, and see;
and thence go to Hamath the great;
then go down to Gath of the Philistines.
Are they better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than your territory,[60]
3 O you who put far away the evil day,
and bring near the seat of violence?

4 "Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory,
and stretch themselves upon their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock,
and calves from the midst of the stall;
5 who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
and like David invent for themselves instruments of music;[61]

55. In verses 21-24 we have the central theme of Amos' message. Jahweh desires, not sacrifices and "solemn assemblies" and noisy singing, but just and righteous living. Perhaps Amos does not condemn the common religious practices as wrong in themselves; but when they are *substituted* for justice and righteousness they become exceedingly distasteful to God. Jahweh even "hates" them when they are performed by evil men.

56. The meaning here is that Jahweh was with Israel during the period of wandering in the wilderness even though they did not offer elaborate sacrifices; His presence was not dependent upon such practices.

57. The meaning of this verse is not entirely clear. It seems to refer to the worship of certain Babylonian gods.

58. That is, they can expect exile in Assyria, the nation which is now showing such great strength. Those who "take" up these images God will "take" into captivity.

59. Verses 25-27 are probably later additions to the text.

60. These cities seem to be mentioned as examples of the fate which Israel may expect, for they were all conquered by Assyria. Is Israel any better than they? (The verse was probably inserted later by an editor, for the cities named were taken by Assyria *after* the time of Amos.)

61. That is, the people seem to think they are like David himself.

6 who drink wine in bowls,
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph![62]
7 Therefore they shall now be the first of those to go into exile,
and the revelry of those who stretch themselves shall pass away."

8 The Lord GOD HAS sworn by himself
(says the LORD, the God of hosts):
"I abhor the pride of Jacob,
and hate his strongholds;
and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it."

9,10 And if ten men remain in one house, they shall die.[63] And when a man's kinsman, he who burns him, shall take him up to bring the bones out of the house, and shall say to him who is in the innermost parts of the house, "Is there still any one with you?" he shall say, "No"; and he shall say, "Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD."[64]

11 For behold, the LORD commands,
and the great house shall be smitten into fragments,
and the little house into bits.
12 Do horses run upon rocks?
Does one plow the sea with oxen?
But you have turned justice into poison
and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood—[65]
13 you who rejoice in Lo-debar,
who say, "Have we not by our own strength
taken Karnaim for ourselves?"[66]
14 "For behold, I will raise up against you a nation,
O house of Israel," says the LORD, the God of hosts;
"and they shall oppress you from the entrance of Hamath
to the Brook of the Arabah."[67]

62. In their self-indulgence (drinking wine from bowls—not satisfied with cups) the people give no heed to the inevitable consequences of their sinfulness.

63. Even those who are not carried away as captives will die (perhaps by pestilence).

64. This is a picture of the utter desolation which will face the relative who might come to bury the dead. If, by chance, a single survivor should be discovered, he would refrain from calling upon Jahweh for fear of still greater disaster.

65. This verse means that Israel's evil is as unnatural as that which is suggested in the first two questions.

66. Verse 13 probably involves a word-play upon the name of two cities (Lo-debar, "a thing of nought"; Karnaim, "horns") taken by Jeroboam II. Israel is rejoicing in these conquests, but (as the following verse adds) Israel herself shall suffer from the conquests of a still greater nation (Assyria).

67. The "entrance of Hamath" is a pass in the Lebanon Mountains; "the Arabah" may be a wady near the Dead Sea. The nation shall be oppressed from its northern to its southern boundaries.

FIVE VISIONS OF JUDGMENT[68]—Amos 7:1-9; 8:1—9:8a

First Vision

7:1 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, he was forming locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and lo, it was the
2 latter growth after the king's mowings.[69] When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said,

"O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee!
How can Jacob stand?
He is so small!"

3 The LORD repented concerning this;
"It shall not be," said the LORD.[70]

Second Vision

4 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, the Lord GOD was calling for a judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating
5 up the land.[71] Then I said,

"O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee!
How can Jacob stand?
He is so small!"

6 The LORD repented concerning this;
"This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.

Third Vision

7 He showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built
8 with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"Behold, I am setting a plumb line
in the midst of my people Israel;

68. The "vision" is a common device employed by the prophets as a means of presenting their messages. It suggests the idea that the insights proclaimed were revealed by God. There are differences of opinion as to whether or not actual abnormal psychological experiences were involved.

69. The first crops were received as taxes by the king. The locusts thus appear before the people's own crop has been cut.

70. In response to the prophet's prayer, Jahweh withholds His punishment, and the locusts do not destroy all the crops (as they had eaten the grass).

71. That is, a drought (or possibly a forest and field fire) has dried up the water supplies and threatens to destroy all life.

I will never again pass by them;[72]
9 the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

Fourth Vision

8:1 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit.
2 And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me,

"The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them.[73]
3 The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,"
says the Lord GOD;
"the dead bodies shall be many;
in every place they shall be cast out in silence."[74]

4 Hear this, you who trample upon the needy,
and bring the poor of the land to an end,
5 saying, "When will the new moon be over,
that we may sell grain?[75]
And the sabbath,
that we may offer wheat for sale,
that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great,[76]
and deal deceitfully with false balances,[77]
6 that we may buy the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,[78]
and sell the refuse of the wheat?"[79]

72. That is, the punishment can no lónger be withheld; Jahweh will pass *through*—not "by"—them (compare *Amos* 5:17 and Note 52, above). The "plumb line," an instrument used by builders in testing the correctness—straightness of line—of construction, suggests that Israel has been tested and found to be "out of line"; hence punishment must ensue.

73. This verse involves a play on words. The Hebrew word for "summer fruit" (*qayits*) is similar in sound to that (*qets*) meaning "end." Thus "summer fruit" suggests the "end" of Israel. (The idea that Israel is "ripe for destruction" may possibly be involved also.)

74. This may be read, "in every place I will cast you out; be silent!"

The following verses (4-14) interrupt the report of the visions. At least some parts of this material do not come from Amos himself.

75. During the festival of the "new moon," as well as on the Sabbath, business was suspended.

76. The "ephah" was a measure of grain, the shekel a piece of money.

77. That is, the people, in their greed, can scarcely wait to resume their dealings with dishonest weights and measures.

78. See *Amos* 2:6, above.

79. That is, even the "refuse" is sold for a profit.

7 The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
"Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.
8 Shall not the land tremble on this account,
and every one mourn who dwells in it,
and all of it rise like the Nile,
and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?"

9 "And on that day," says the Lord GOD,
"I will make the sun go down at noon,
and darken the earth in broad daylight.[80]
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
and all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth upon all loins,
and baldness on every head;[81]
I will make it like the mourning for an only son,
and the end of it like a bitter day.

11 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD,
"when I will send a famine on the land;
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the LORD.
12 They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD,
but they shall not find it.

13 "In that day the fair virgins and the young men
shall faint for thirst.
14 Those who swear by Ashimah of Samaria,
and say, 'As thy god lives, O Dan,'
and, 'As the way of Beer-sheba lives,'
they shall fall, and never rise again."[82]

80. This picture was undoubtedly suggested by an eclipse of the sun (such as the one visible around Jerusalem in 763 B.C.).

81. The wearing of sackcloth and the shaving of the head were signs of mourning.

82. The first two lines of verse 14 may refer to the two objects set up by Jeroboam I at Bethel and Dan (see *I Kings* 12:25-30 in the last section in Chapter IX). If so, the original text may have had "Bethel" instead of "Samaria." The "way of Beer-sheba" was an expression used in taking an oath.

Fifth Vision

9:1 I saw the LORD standing beside the altar, and he said:
"Smite the capitals until the thresholds shake,
and shatter them on the heads of all the people;
and what are left of them I will slay with the sword;
not one of them shall flee away,
not one of them shall escape.

2 "Though they dig into Sheol,
from there shall my hand take them;
though they climb up to heaven,
from there I will bring them down.[83]
3 Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
from there I will search out and take them;
and though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea,
there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them.
4 And though they go into captivity before their enemies,
there I will command the sword, and it shall slay them;
and I will set my eyes upon them
for evil and not for good."

5 The Lord, GOD of hosts,
he who touches the earth and it melts,
and all who dwell in it mourn,
and all of it rises like the Nile,
and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt;
6 who builds his upper chambers in the heavens,
and founds his vault upon the earth;
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out upon the surface of the earth—
the LORD is his name.[84]

7 "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me,
O people of Israel?" says the LORD.
"Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,

83. *Psalm* 139:7ff. might be compared at this point.
84. Verses 5 and 6 were probably added by a later editor.

and the Philistines from Caphtor[85] and the Syrians from Kir?[86]

8a Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom,
and I will destroy it from the surface of the ground."[87]

85. That is, from Crete.

86. "Kir" may refer to a district near the Caspian Sea.

87. The rest of chapter 9 (verses 8b-15) is omitted here because it is generally recognized as the work of a later writer. It announces a message of hope which is quite inconsistent with Amos' anouncement of punishment and doom; and it expresses this message in the language of a later period.

In this fifth vision there appears the idea of the universality of Jahweh's power and judgment. The divine activity is not limited to the territory of Israel, but extends through the world (9:2-4). Furthermore, it is Jahweh who guides the movements not only of Israel but of other nations as well (9:7). When these references are taken together with the series of judgments appearing in *Amos* 1:2—2:16 (see especially Note 28), it can readily be seen that the religious thought of Amos points, at least, in the direction of monotheism; it remains only for other prophets to deny the very existence of other gods before absolute monotheism is explicitly proclaimed. (The idea of the universality of Jahweh is also evident in the so-called "nature passages," but since these probably do not come from Amos himself they cannot be regarded as indicating this prophet's thought.)

Considering the utterances of Amos as whole, it is obvious that uppermost in his thinking is the idea of justice and righteousness. Jahweh is, above all, a God whose chief concern is for the practice of these qualities in the lives of men and of nations. Sacrifice and ceremony are never acceptable as substitutes. The fundamental requirements of deity are ethical, not ceremonial. Thus Amos is rightly designated as the prophet of justice and righteousness, and the key to his entire message is the statement:

"But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24).

CHAPTER XII

HOSEA (c. 750-735 B.C.)

The prophet Hosea, like Amos, was active in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. His home, apparently, was in that nation.

Since the prophetic ministry of Hosea followed very closely that of Amos, it is evident that he witnessed the same conditions which had confronted his predecessor. During his lifetime, however, there occurred certain political developments which are reflected in his message. The death of Jeroboam II (744 B.C.) marked the end of political stability. There followed a period of some twenty years during which conspiracy and bloodshed prevailed. Zechariah ruled only six months before he was murdered by Shallum. Shallum ruled but one month before he was murdered by Menahem. Menahem remained upon the throne for seven years and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. But Pekahiah, after only two years, was murdered by Pekah. After four years of rule Pekah was murdered by Hoshea (just after the end of Hosea's prophetic ministry). To add to the confusion the threat of Assyrian aggression increased steadily, and various foreign alliances were made by Israel's rulers.

These conditions of conspiracy and violence were accompanied by the same moral and religious evils which Amos had so boldly condemned. The oppression of the poor and the general moral corruption continued. Baal-worship, the adoration of images, sacrifice, and sacred prostitution flourished. But whereas Amos had directed most of his attention to social injustices, Hosea (although not overlooking these evils) was concerned chiefly with the corrupt religious practices and the general disorders in political life (violence, bloodshed, and foreign alliances). He accused the priests of misleading the people and withholding from them the true knowledge of Jahweh and of His will.

But while Hosea followed Amos in representing Jahweh as a God of righteousness who must bring punishment for such conditions, there is another characteristic of deity which he emphasized particularly. Jahweh, he announced, is a God of *love*. He cares for Israel and cannot let her go. In picturing Jahweh's love for Israel Hosea uses the symbol of the marriage relation. The nation, like an erring wife, has become unfaithful; but Jahweh, while He must punish, continues to love. Thus Hosea is remembered especially as the prophet of the *love* of God.

Along with this emphasis Hosea also stressed the need for true knowledge of Jahweh and of His will. It is because the people do not *know* Him that they have become unfaithful. They have failed to understand the real nature of the divine character and the divine will and have refused to respond to it as God desires.

Most of the book of *Hosea* undoubtedly comes from Hosea himself. Unfortunately some of the material has been transmitted in such a way that it is difficult to determine the meaning originally intended. As a whole, however, the book presents a reasonably clear picture of Hosea's ideas and message.

HOSEA'S CALL (AND FAMILY?)—Hosea 1:2-9; 3

1:2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry,

3 for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the LORD."[1] So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel,
5 and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.[2] And on that day, I will break the bow[3] of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name Not pitied, for I will no more have pity on the house
7 of Israel, to forgive them at all.[4] But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the LORD their God; I will not deliver them by bow, nor by sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen."[5]

8,9 When she had weaned Not pitied, she conceived and bore a son. And the LORD said, "Call his name Not my people, for you are not my people and I am not your God."[6]

3:1 And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes and raisins."[7]
2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech
3 of barley.[8] And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will I also
4 be to you." For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim.[9]

1. The significance of this verse will be discussed below (Note 6).

2. The name "Jezreel" is given to the child to remind the people of Israel of the scenes which had occurred in the valley of Jezreel, where, by terrible bloodshed, Jehu had succeeded in establishing his dynasty. As punishment for such bloodshed Israel must be destroyed.

3. That is, the "power."

4. The name of the second child is intended as a warning to Israel that the divine mercy or pity is at an end; punishment is certain.

5. Verse 7 (at least the first part) was probably inserted by a later editor, after Judah had escaped from Assyrian conquest.

6. The name of the third child is intended to suggest to the people of Israel that they are no longer worthy to be called Jahweh's people.

Concerning this account there is great difference of opinion. The most common interpretations are as follows: (1) Hosea actually marries a sacred prostitute from one of the "high places" in order to impress upon Israel (by means of the symbolic act) a sense of the nation's immorality (disloyalty to Jahweh and to His will). (2) Hosea marries a thoroughly virtuous woman; verse 2 means, not that she herself is immoral, but that she comes from among an immoral people, who are untrue to Jahweh. (3) When Hosea marries Gomer she is not a prostitute; it is later that she becomes unfaithful to him. (4) The entire account is an allegory. In any case, the symbol of marriage is used to suggest the relationship between Jahweh and Israel.

7. The offering of "cakes and raisins" must have been a feature of Baal-worship.

8. The "homer" and "lethech" were measures of grain.

9. That is, the seclusion of the woman whom he is to take shall be a symbol of the captivity which is in store for Israel.

5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.[10]

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS

Hosea 2:2-5,8-20; 4:1-10

2:2 "Plead with your mother, plead—[11]
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her harlotry from her face,
and her adultery from between her breasts;
3 lest I strip her naked
and make her as in the day she was born,
and make her like a wilderness,
and set her like a parched land,
and slay her with thirst.
4 Upon her children also I will have no pity,
because they are children of harlotry.[12]
5 For their mother has played the harlot;
she that conceived them has acted shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my bread and my water,
my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'[13]

10. Verse 5 is a late addition to the text.

According to interpretations (1) and (3) listed above in Note 6, Gomer has now deserted Hosea but is again brought into his home. Hosea means to say that he has continued to love her in spite of her unfaithfulness; and because he loves her he cannot give her up. Surely God's love for Israel can be no less than his love for Gomer. Thus, through his own tragic domestic experience Hosea comes to realize that Jahweh must indeed be a God of love and mercy.

If interpretation (2) is accepted, the woman mentioned here is not Gomer at all, but a prostitute whom Hosea now takes into his home (not as a wife) and places in seclusion as a symbol for Israel. Just as he cares for her in an attempt to "bring her to her senses," so Jahweh, in his love and goodness, attempts to restore Israel as an obedient and faithful nation.

If interpretation (4) is correct, then this paragraph also may have been intended as allegorical. *Hosea* 2:14 (below) clearly indicates that the prophet's thought centers primarily upon Jahweh's treatment of Israel.

Whichever of these interpretations is correct, it is, in any case, the *love* of God which Hosea proclaims.

11. Jahweh is speaking here to Hosea. "Your mother" refers to Israel.

12. That is, the Israelites are children of a "harlot,"—children of an unfaithful nation. Israel, like an immoral wife, has turned to the Baals (baalim), deserting Jahweh, her true "husband."

13. The Baals were thought by the Canaanites to be the givers of fertility to the soil. As the Israelites turned more and more to agriculture they were led to believe that they too must turn to these supposed givers of fertility. They did not know (verse 8) that it is Jahweh alone who provides all things.

8 And she did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished upon her silver
and gold which they used for Baal.
9 Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time,
and my wine in its season;
and I will take away my wool and my flax,
which were to cover her nakedness.
10 Now I will uncover her lewdness
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one shall rescue her out of my hand.
11 And I will put an end to all her mirth,
her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths,
and all her appointed feasts.
12 And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
of which she said,
'These are my hire,
which my lovers have given me.'[14]
I will make them a forest,
and the beasts of the field shall devour them.
13 And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals
when she burned incense to them
and decked herself with her ring and jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
and forgot me, says the LORD.

14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.[15]
15 And there I will give her her vineyards,
and make the valley of Achor a door of hope.
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

16 "And in that day, says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and
17 no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of
the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no
18 more. And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts

14. Like a prostitute who gives herself for "hire," Israel has given herself to the Baals in order to receive, supposedly, desirable produce.

15. Jahweh desires to take Israel back again in spite of her unfaithfulness. The thought continues in verse 19. (Verses 15-18 come from a period later than that of Hosea.)

of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground;
and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will
19 make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me for ever;
I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast
20 love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you
shall know the LORD."

4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel;
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
There is no faithfulness or kindness,
and no knowledge of God in the land;[16]
2 there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery;
they break all bounds and murder follows murder.[17]
3 Therefore the land mourns,
and all who dwell in it languish,
and also the beasts of the field,
and the birds of the air;
and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

4 Yet let no one contend,
and let none accuse,
for with you is my contention, O priest.[18]
5 You shall stumble by day,
the prophet also shall stumble with you by night;[19]
and I will destroy your mother.[20]
6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge,
I reject you from being a priest to me.
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.[21]
7 The more they increased,
the more they sinned against me;
I will change their glory into shame.

16. By "knowledge of God" Hosea means far more than the intellectual apprehension of certain facts *about* God; as the previous (parallel) line indicates, this "knowledge" is identified with "faithfulness" or loyalty. *Really* to know God means to be faithful or loyal to Him.

17. In this verse Hosea is denouncing the general disorder and violence of the times (see the introduction to this chapter).

18. The idea in this verse seems to be: Let no man blame the people; the error lies with the priests, who have set the example.

19. To "stumble" means here to "be overthrown."

20. "Mother" refers either to the priesthood or to the nation as a whole.

21. The priests have failed to teach the people a true knowledge (see Note 16) of God. Therefore they shall be punished.

8 They feed on the sin of my people;
they are greedy for their iniquity.[22]
9 And it shall be like people, like priest;[23]
I will punish them for their ways,
and requite them for their deeds.
10 They shall eat, but not be satisfied;
they shall play the harlot, but not multiply;
because they have forsaken the LORD
to cherish harlotry.

GOD'S REQUIREMENT OF MAN—Hosea 6:1-6

6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn, that he may heal us;
he has stricken, and he will bind us up.
2 After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.[24]
3 Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD;
his going forth is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth."[25]

4 What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like the morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early away.[26]
5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,[27]
and my judgment goes forth as the light.
6 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.[28]

22. That is, the priests are made rich by the evil forms of worship which they conduct and which they therefore encourage.

23. That is, the priests are no better than the people (or, the priests shall be punished like the people).

24. "Two days . . . the third day" means "shortly."

25. Hosea represents the people as uttering these words (verses 1-3) in their complacent confidence that Jahweh, as their God, will spare and bless them. It is "a lovely but shallow song." It is not true penitence.

26. That is, the people's love or loyalty is as transitory or unstable as the "morning cloud," and as the "dew," which vanish quickly after the sun appears.

27. That is, the people are punished as the prophets announce.

28. This verse may be said to sum up the central emphasis in Hosea's message. More than sacrifice and offerings, Jahweh desires "steadfast love" and true "knowledge of God." (See again Note 16.)

11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.[29]
2 The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,
and burning incense to idols.

3 Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
4 I led them with cords of compassion,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one
who eases the yoke on their jaws,[30]
and I bent down to them and fed them.

5 They shall return to the land of Egypt,
and Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
6 The sword shall rage against their cities,
consume the bars of their gates,
and devour them in their fortresses.
7 My people are bent on turning away from me;
so they are appointed to the yoke,
and none shall remove it.[31]

8 How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
How can I make you like Admah!
How can I treat you like Zeboiim![32]
My heart recoils within me,
my compassion grows warm and tender.
9 I will not execute my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not man,

29. Previously Hosea has represented the relationship between Jahweh and Israel as that of husband and wife; here he represents the relationship as that of father and son. Jahweh is the loving Father who cared for Israel in his youth and who is deeply grieved because of His people's ingratitude and unfaithfulness.

30. Hosea here illustrates the divine care with the picture of the driver who eases the yoke upon the animals being led.

31. This probably is intended to suggest the "yoke" of slavery.

32. Admah and Zeboiim are cities which were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah.

the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come to destroy.[33]

10 They shall go after the LORD,
he will roar like a lion;
yea, he will roar,
and his sons shall come trembling from the west;[34]
11 they shall come eagerly like birds from Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria;
and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.[35]

A FINAL ENTREATY[36]—Hosea 14

14:1 Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.
2 Take with you words
and return to the LORD;
say to him,
"Take away all iniquity;
accept that which is good
and we will render
the fruit of our lips.
3 Assyria shall not save us,
we will not ride upon horses;
and we will say no more, 'Our God,'
to the work of our hands.
In thee the orphan finds mercy."[37]

4 I will heal their faithlessness;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.
5 I will be as the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom as the lily,
he shall strike root as the poplar;

33. Verses 8 and 9 have been described as constituting the "greatest passage in Hosea." Jahweh is a God of love, who cannot give up Israel nor show only wrath. (Some scholars doubt that these verses come from the prophet himself. In any case they express Hosea's emphasis.)

34. Just as the lion calls to its "children" to follow, so Jahweh will call His children to return.

35. Verses 10 and 11 were added to the text later *(after* the Exile).

36. Many scholars believe that this chapter was not written by Hosea.

37. The meaning of this verse is that only Jahweh can save Israel and once again become a "father." No real help can be expected either from idols ("the work of our hands") or from foreign alliances with Assyria and Egypt ("horses" may refer to Egyptian cavalry).

6 his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.[38]
7 They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow,
they shall flourish as a garden;
they shall blossom as the vine,
their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

8 O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?
It is I who answer and look after you.
I am like an evergreen cypress,
from me comes your fruit.

9 Whoever is wise, let him understand these things;
whoever is discerning, let him know them;
for the ways of the LORD are right,
and the upright walk in them,
but transgressors stumble in them.[39]

38. This refers to the scent of the trees of Lebanon.

39. Verse 9 is obviously an addition by the editor of the material; perhaps the entire chapter comes from his hand. If, however, the chapter includes material which comes from Hosea himself, the prophet is expressing the hope that Israel may yet repent and return to Jahweh in time to avert final and total destruction.

Concerning the work of Hosea as a whole, it has been seen that his thought is dominated by the idea of Jahweh's love. Perhaps it was through his own experience with Gomer that he came to recognize this attribute of deity. If he, as a man, could continue to love an unfaithful wife, surely God's love for Israel must be even greater. Punishment is deserved, it is true. But punishment will be inflicted in love, not in wrath or anger. God himself suffers because He must chastise a wayward people. If Israel would only "know" Jahweh and return to Him, He could once more restore and bless them. Hosea fears that this is not likely to occur. The verses which best summarize the message of Hosea are the following:

"For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings." (6:6)

"How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
. . .
My heart recoils within me,
my compassion grows warm and tender.
. . .
for I am God and not man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come to destroy." (11:8-9)

CHAPTER XIII

ISAIAH (740– c. 700 B.C.)

Whereas the prophetic activity of Amos and Hosea occurred in the Northern Kingdom, that of Isaiah took place in the Kingdom of Judah. Most of his life was spent in the city of Jerusalem. Undoubtedly he belonged to a family which enjoyed considerable prominence, for he had access to the court of the king and had associations with the political leaders of the time. He was a statesman as well as a prophet. According to his own report, his prophetic ministry began "in the year that King Uzziah died" (740 B.C.); it continued for some forty years.

Isaiah witnessed many important events. Assyria continued to gain strength and to extend its conquests. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.) conquered Damascus, in Syria, and received tribute from both Israel and Judah. He was succeeded by Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.), who overran Israel and for three years besieged Samaria. This city finally fell in 722 B.C., just as Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon II (722-705 B.C.). During the reign of Sargon Assyria reached the height of its power, controlling most of the territory at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and demanding tribute from the peoples there. Sennacherib became ruler of Assyria in 705 B.C.

II Kings 17 reports the fall of Samaria, which brought to an end the Northern Kingdom, and indicates some of the consequences. Hoshea was ruler of Israel at the time.

> "Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria, and for three years he besieged it. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (*II Kings* 17:3-6)

> And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sephar-vaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities." *(II Kings* 17:24)

The results of this mixing of peoples were far-reaching. On the one hand there was produced in and around Samaria a population which came to be regarded by the inhabitants of Judah (to the south) as a racially half-breed group which had lost its distinctive character. Furthermore, the foreigners now settled in the land are reported to have introduced their own gods and religious practices with such effectiveness that Jahweh-worship, though continuing to exist, lost its true meaning and became corrupted by the foreign influences. Altogether these developments affected profoundly later attitudes and re-

lationships: the inhabitants of Judah could only disdain a people which had thus lost what was regarded as racial and religious purity; and in turn the inhabitants of the land around Samaria deeply resented the disdain. The Jewish-Samaritan hostility which thus resulted is reflected even in New Testament times.

During this general period the Kingdom of Judah, to the south, at first enjoyed considerable prosperity. Under King Uzziah (780-740 B.C.), a contemporary of Jeroboam II of Israel, Judah became strong. Many of the people were rich, and religion flourished (at least outwardly). Conditions were much the same as those which had confronted Amos and Hosea in the north. Soon, however, the political situation became serious. Ahaz (735-720 B.C.), fearing Syria more than Assyria, sought help from Tiglath-pileser, thus practically inviting Assyria into Palestine and bringing Judah into subjection to that nation. Hezekiah, successor to Ahaz, sought to secure once more Judah's independence. Depending upon support from Egypt, he joined with several surrounding nations (Phoenicia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, etc.) in open defiance of Assyria. The rebellion failed. Sennacherib, ruler of Assyria at the time, advanced into Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem, shutting up Hezekiah "like a caged bird" (as Sennacherib himself reports). Hezekiah finally surrendered. And in order to pay the required tribute he was compelled to take even the treasures of the Temple and the palace.

Isaiah witnessed all of this. During the earlier prosperous years he saw the social evils which prevailed,—the injustice, the luxury, the oppression of the poor, the violence. He saw the outward worship of Jahweh combined with the worship of idols. He saw that the people were dominated by pride and self-complacency. As the years passed he observed the increasing tendency to rely upon foreign alliances and upon the strength of men rather than upon God.

In his denunciation of these conditions Isaiah presented ideas of God and of the divine will which constitute an extremely important contribution to Hebrew religious thought. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his message is his emphasis upon the *holiness* of God. To the idea of holiness Isaiah gives new meaning; it involves far more than the earlier "taboo." Jahweh is "holy," first of all, in the sense that He is transcendent, "high and lifted up," ruler of all the earth, universally supreme. Jahweh is "holy" also in the sense that He is a God of justice, righteousness, and purity, requiring ethical conduct rather than ceremony and ritual. Thus Jahweh is the "Holy One of Israel."

A second fundamental element in Isaiah's message is that of *faith*. Since Jahweh is a God who is universally transcendent and also righteous, He deserves and demands the confidence and trust of His people. They must rely upon Him rather than upon their own strength and upon foreign alliances.

In the message of Isaiah, also, there is the element of *hope*. In his pronouncements of doom, it is true, he declares that only a "remnant" will be saved. But for this remnant there is hope. "A remnant shall return" is the meaning of the name given to one of his children. The idea is one which is most characteristic of the prophet. Hope is also expressed in his figure of the Messiah, an anticipated ruler from the "stump of Jesse" (the house of David) who will establish the reign of the divine will upon the earth. This idea influenced profoundly later Hebrew thought. (Some scholars do not regard the "messianic" passages as coming from Isaiah.)

From the point of view of literary quality and beauty the work of Isaiah is perhaps unsurpassed in the Old Testament. The prophet has been called the "prince of Hebrew orators."

The book of *Isaiah*, as it now appears, includes the work of other writers in addition to the one whose name it bears. When Isaiah's utterances were collected and published the editors had before them also a certain amount of material to which, apparently, no names were attached. Some of this material was added to the words of the named prophet. Chapters 40-66 obviously come from a later time and will be discussed in Chapter XVI. It is customary to designate chapters 1—39 as the work of the prophet Isaiah, although within this portion of the book there are numerous passages which cannot be traced to him (especially 13:1—14:23; 21:1-10; 24—27; 34—35; 36—39; and others, concerning which scholars are not in such unanimous agreement). The passages which do come from Isaiah have not been recorded, in the Bible, in chronological sequence.

THE CALL OF ISAIAH—Isaiah 6

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne,
2 high and lifted up; and his train[1] filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim;[2] each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with
3 two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."[3]

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who
5 called, and the house was filled with smoke.[4] And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"[5]

6 Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning
7 coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is
8 taken away, and your sin is forgiven."[6] And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here
9 I am! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

'Hear and hear, but do not understand;
see and see, but do not perceive.'
10 Make the heart of this people fat,
and their ears heavy,
and shut their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."[7]

11 Then I said, "How long, O Lord?"[8] And he said:

1. That is, the skirts of his robe.
2. The "seraphim" (plural of seraph) designate some kind of beings represented as Jahweh's attendants.
3. Here we see Isaiah's idea of Jahweh as the majestic, transcendent God of the "whole earth."
4. Since the time of Moses at Mount Sinai smoke and cloud had been symbols of the divine presence.
5. Isaiah feels that he and his people are unworthy to face the presence of One whose holiness is fundamentally ethical (something very different from mere "taboo"—see Note 52 in Chapter V and Note 9 in Chapter VIII).
6. Fire has long been a symbol of purification.
7. Verses 9 and 10 are intended to describe, not the purpose of Isaiah's ministry, but the experience that was to be his. The people would not heed, nor would they return to Jahweh.
8. That is, "how long shall this condition prevail?"

"Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without men,
and the land is utterly desolate,
12 and the LORD removes men far away,
and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
13 And though a tenth remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains standing
when it is felled."
The holy seed is its stump.[9]

THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD[10]—Isaiah 5:1-7

5:1 Let me sing for my beloved
a love song concerning his vineyard:[11]
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
2 He digged it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge, I pray you, between me
and my vineyard.
4 What more was there to do for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?
5 And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,

9. Disaster must be the punishment for evil. Yet, even though the nation must be destroyed, new life will spring up, just as new life sprouts from the stump of a tree that has been cut. (Verses 12-13 may be a late addition to the text.)

10. This song is really a parable, in which the vineyard represents Judah (although Isaiah does not at first tell its meaning). The prophet apparently sings the song at a festival, when people are celebrating the gathering of the grapes. Jesus bases one of his parables on this (Mark 12:1-12).

11. The word rendered "beloved" is sometimes translated as "friend."

and it shall be devoured;[12]
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, a cry![13]

A SERIES OF WOES[14]—Isaiah 5:8-24

5:8 Woe to those who join house to house,
who add field to field,
until there is no more room,
and you are made to dwell alone
in the midst of the land.[15]
9 The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing:
"Surely many houses shall be desolate,
large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath,
and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah."[16]

12. Since the vineyard produces only bad fruit, the "hedge" is taken away and animals graze over it.

13. In order to preserve the idea of the original Hebrew word-plays the last part of this verse has been translated by one writer: "He looked for rule, but, behold, misrule! For redress, but, behold, distress!" Jahweh has cared for His vineyard (Judah) but only that which is evil has appeared in it.

14. Isaiah now illustrates his point in the parable by indicating specifically the ways in which Judah has failed to live up to Jahweh's expectations and will.

15. Isaiah here condemns the selfishness which leads the rich to seize the land of the poor and to establish large estates.

16. As punishment the yield of the vineyards shall be only about a tenth of the amount of seed originally planted. (The "bath" and the "ephah" equaled about eight or nine gallons each; the "homer" was about ten times as much.)

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning,
that they may run after strong drink,
who tarry late into the evening
till wine inflames them!
12 They have lyre and harp,
timbrel and flute and wine at their feasts;
but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD,
or see the work of his hands.[17]

13 Therefore my people go into exile
for want of knowledge;
their honored men are dying of hunger,
and their multitude is parched with thirst.
14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite
and opened its mouth beyond measure,
and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude go down,
her throng and he who exults in her.[18]
15 Man is bowed down, and men are brought low,
and the eyes of the haughty are humbled.
16 But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice,
and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.
17 Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture,
fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins.[19]

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood,
who draw sin as with cart ropes,
19 who say: "Let him make haste,
let him speed his work
that we may see it;
let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near,
and let it come, that we may know it!"[20]
20 Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter![21]

17. The people are so much concerned with their dissipation that they give no thought to Jahweh or to spiritual values.
18. Sheol shall receive them; they shall perish.
19. The people shall be taken away and their land shall become nothing but pasture.
20. The people challenge God to show His power; they doubt that He will really punish them. Compare verses 18-19 with *Amos* 5:18.
21. All sense of moral distinctions has been lost.

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!
22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,
23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of his right![22]

24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,
so their root will be as rottenness,
and their blossom go up like dust;
for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

A DENUNCIATION OF THE WOMEN—Isaiah 3:16-26

3:16 The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion[23] are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet;[24]
17 the Lord will smite with a scab
the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the head-
19 bands, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs;
20 the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the
21,22 amulets; the signet rings and the nose rings; the festal robes, the man-
23 tles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the garments of gauze, the linen
garments, the turbans, and the veils.[25]

24 Instead of perfume there will be rottenness;
and instead of a girdle, a rope;[26]
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;
and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;

22. The self-indulgence of the officials has led them to take bribes and to give a verdict of "guilty" to those who are innocent.
23. See Note 4 in Chapter VIII.
24. The women are concerned only with attracting attention to themselves. The "tinkling" probably refers to the sound made by their anklets.
25. Verses 18-23 may be a late addition to the text.
26. This suggests the rope by which captives were led.

instead of beauty, shame.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword
and your mighty men in battle.
26 And her gates shall lament and mourn;
ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground.

A GENERAL ARRAIGNMENT—Isaiah 1:2-20

1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
for the LORD has spoken:
"Sons have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.
3 The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand."

4 Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
sons who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the LORD,
they have despised[27] the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.

5 Why will you still be smitten,
that you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and bleeding wounds;
they are not pressed out, or bound up,
or softened with oil.[28]

7 Your country lies desolate,
your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence
aliens devour your land;
it is desolate, as overthrown by aliens.

27. Or, "spurned."
28. This description of Judah as a bruised and wounded body was probably uttered by Isaiah after the devastation had been caused by Sennacherib during the reign of Hezekiah. (See the introduction to this chapter.)

8 And the daughter of Zion[29] is left
like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.[30]
9 If the LORD of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah![31]
11 "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of he-goats.

12 "When you come to appear before me,
who requires of you
this trampling of my courts?
13 Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and sabbath[32] and the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me,
I am weary of bearing them.
15 When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.

29. This expression is here a personification of the city of Jerusalem.

30. That is, Jerusalem stands in the midst of desolation like a little hut in the middle of a vineyard or garden (where guards spent the night to prevent thievery).

31. Isaiah addresses now the leaders of worship in Jerusalem. "Sodom" and "Gomorrah," of course, are names symbolic of evil.

32. This refers to special observances held at the time of the new moon and on the sabbath.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
17 learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
defend the fatherless,[33]
plead for the widow.[34]

18 "Come now, let us reason together,
says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.[35]
19 If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be devoured by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

"AH, ASSYRIA . . . ."[36]—Isaiah 10:5-23

10:5 Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger,
the staff of my fury![37]
6 Against a godless nation I send him,
and against the people of my wrath I command him,
to take spoil and seize plunder,
and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 But he does not so intend,
and his mind does not so think;

33. That is, obtain justice for the fatherless (orphan).

34. In this section of the material Isaiah has been expressing convictions similar to those which were central in the message of Amos. Outward forms of worship are highly displeasing to God when performed by men who do not practice justice and righteousness in their lives. Compare this with Amos 5:21-24 both as to thought and as to language.

35. This verse is often interpreted to mean that if the people turn again to Jahweh they shall be forgiven and spared. It is possible, however, that Isaiah means this as irony: Though their sins are "like scarlet," they act as if they are pure ("white as snow"), etc.

36. Isaiah now gives his interpretation of Assyrian aggression upon Israel. Assyria is used by Jahweh to punish a guilty people (Judah) although Assyria, also evil, must herself eventually be punished too.

37. Assyria is the instrument ("rod" or "staff") with which Jahweh chastizes and disciplines Judah.

but it is in his mind to destroy,
and to cut off nations not a few;[38]
8 for he says:
"Are not my commanders all kings?[39]
9 Is not Calno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?[40]
10 As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols
whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
11 shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols
as I have done to Samaria and her images?"

12 When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his
13 haughty pride. For he says:
"By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding;
I have removed the boundaries of peoples,
and have plundered their treasures;
like a bull I have brought down those who sat on thrones.
14 My hand has found like a nest
the wealth of the peoples;
and as men gather eggs that have been forsaken
so I have gathered all the earth;
and there was none that moved a wing,
or opened the mouth, or chirped."

15 Shall the ax vaunt itself over him who hews with it,
or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?
As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,
or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood![41]
16 Therefore the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors,
and under his glory a burning will be kindled,
like the burning of fire.[42]

38. Assyria does not know that she ("he") is being thus used by Jahweh; her thought is only to plunder and destroy.

39. That is, even the "commanders" of Assyria are as great as kings (according to Assyria's boast).

40. Assyria is here represented as priding herself on the overthrow of all of these cities.

41. Assyria is only the tool used by Jahweh. Therefore, when the king of Assyria boasts of his own superiority he is as foolish as any tool (an ax or a saw or a rod or a staff) would be to regard itself as superior to the one who was wielding it.

42. That is, Assyria herself will eventually be punished.

17 The light of Israel will become a fire,
and his Holy One a flame;[43]
and it will burn and devour
his thorns and briers in one day.
18 The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land
the LORD will destroy, both soul and body,
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.
19 The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few
that a child can write them down.

20 In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean upon him that smote them, but will lean upon
21 the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.[44] A remnant will return, the
22 remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.[45] For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction
23 is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord, the LORD of hosts, will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.[46]

"IN RETURNING AND REST YOU SHALL BE SAVED"[47]

Isaiah 30:1-5, 15-17

30:1 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,
"who carry out a plan, but not mine;
and who make a league, but not of my spirit,
that they may add sin to sin;
2 who set out to go down to Egypt,
without asking for my counsel,
to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh,
and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!
3 Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame,
and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.[48]

43. The "light of Israel" and "his Holy One" both refer to Jahweh Himself.

44. That is, those who are spared will trust in Jahweh, not in foreign alliances (such as those made with Assyria, a nation which later "smote them").

45. Even though only a few in Israel will be spared, yet that "remnant" *shall* return to Jahweh. This is one of Isaiah's characteristic ideas.

46. The divine purpose, established on the basis of righteousness, will finally be fulfilled in all the earth.

47. Isaiah now turns his attention directly to the question of alliances with Egypt. As Assyrian domination increased, Judah (with other surrounding nations) had sought help from the Egyptian ruler. Isaiah strongly condemns this alliance. Judah's strength lies, not in Egypt, but in loyalty to Jahweh and confidence in Him.

48. That is, alliance with Egypt will result only in "shame" and "humiliation."

4 For though his officials are at Zoan
and his envoys reach Hanes,[49]
5 every one comes to shame
through a people that cannot profit them,
that brings neither help nor profit,
but shame and disgrace."[50]

15 For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel,
"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."[51]
16 And you would not, but you said,
"No! We will speed upon horses,"
therefore you shall speed away;
and, "We will ride upon swift steeds,"
therefore your pursuers shall be swift.
17 A thousand shall flee at the threat of one,
at the threat of five you shall flee,
till you are left
like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain,
like a signal on a hill.[52]

MESSIANIC UTTERANCES[53]—Isaiah 9:2-7; 11:1-9

9:2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.[54]
3 Thou hast multiplied the nation,
thou hast increased its joy;

49. This seems to mean that Judah's envoys are to be met at these places, located in the Egyptian Delta.

50. That is, Egypt is a "people" which can offer no real help, but will bring, instead, only "shame and disgrace."

51. Here Isaiah expresses the underlying thought in all of this material. Security for Israel (Judah) lies only in a return to Jahweh and in quiet trust in Him. It is to God, and not to men, that the people must turn.

52. Those who remain will be so few that they may be compared to a lonely pole on the top of a mountain.

53. In these passages, two of the best-known in the Old Testament, there is described a great and wonderful king who will restore the dynasty of David, relieve the oppressed, and rule with justice and righteousness. The term "Messiah" (meaning "the anointed") has been applied to this figure. If the passages come from Isaiah (scholars differ on this point) they reveal the prophet's hope for the future and his confidence in the ultimate fulfillment of a divine purpose.

54. That is, after the time of darkness there shall be light.

they rejoice before thee
as with joy at the harvest,
as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
4 For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
thou hast broken as on the day of Midian.[55]
5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.[56]
6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,[57]
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

11:1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,[58]
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;[59]
4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

55. The "yoke" of the oppressor and the "staff" and "rod" which have inflicted wounds shall be broken, just as Gideon broke the power of the Midianites (recall the accounts concerning Gideon in Chapter VI).

56. That is, all the evidences of war shall be destroyed.

57. Or, "Divine hero," or "God-like man of valor."

58. This means, of course, that the king ("shoot") will come from the family line ("stump") of David, and hence of Jesse (David's father).

59. Moffatt translates: "He will not judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay."

and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,
and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.[60]

6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.[61]
7 The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
9 They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NEW ERA

Isaiah 2:2-4; 32:16-18

2:2 It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,[62]
3 and many peoples shall come, and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples;

60. That is, he shall be clothed with (possess) the spiritual qualities of righteousness and faithfulness.

61. In the reign of the Messiah there shall be such absolute peace and harmony that even the wild beasts will cease to prey upon domestic animals. The "child" who tends the flocks will no longer fear wild beasts; neither will children be endangered by poisonous snakes (verse 8).

62. Jahweh's "house" (the Temple) on Mount Zion shall be the lofty center of interest and worship for all nations.

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

32:16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
17 And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever.[63]
18 My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.[64]

63. Compare *Isaiah* 30:15.

64. For a review of the fundamental elements in Isaiah's message see again the introduction to this chapter. Underlying all of his utterances there is the idea of the *holiness* of Jahweh, with all that this idea now involves. God is "the Holy One" of Israel, transcendent, utterly righteous,—the One to whom men must turn in faith and trust, the One who alone provides a basis of hope for all who are obedient and who trust in His righteous will.

Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah have been studied as the most important prophets of the eighth century, B.C. A fourth eighth-century prophet was Micah (c. 725—c. 700 B.C.), whose emphases were similar to those of Amos. In the book of *Micah* there is found a passage which summarizes in a rather striking way the distinctive emphases of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah:

"With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has showed you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness (or steadfast love)
and to walk humbly with your God?" (*Micah* 6:6-8)

In this passage as a whole there is drawn the characteristic prophetic contrast between the sacrifice (including child sacrifice) and ceremony, which God does not desire, and the right ethical response to God, which He does require. More specifically the summary of the emphases of the other eighth-century prophets is seen in the last two lines: men must "do justice" (Amos), show "kindness" or "steadfast love" (Hosea), and "walk humbly with . . . God" (Isaiah stressed the "holiness" of God and the need for trust in Him alone). (The significance of these words quoted from the book of *Micah* is not affected by the fact that they should not, perhaps, be ascribed to the prophet who bore that name.)

CHAPTER XIV

JEREMIAH (626—c. 585 B.C.) AND THE DEUTERONOMIC REFORM

Jeremiah was born at Anathoth, a place in the territory of Benjamin, located about four miles northeast of Jerusalem. His father was Hilkiah, a priest. His prophetic activity occurred approximately a century after the time of Isaiah and Micah.

During the seventh century, B.C., important changes were taking place around Palestine. Assyrian power began to decline. For a brief period of time the Scythians, from the north, threatened to overrun the country. More important, however, was the steady rise of the Babylonian (Chaldean) empire in the east. Both Assyria and Egypt attempted to withstand this new threat to their security, but neither was successful. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell in 612 B.C., and a little later the Egyptian armies were defeated by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadrezzar. Thus began the period of Babylonian supremacy.

The kings of Judah during this time were Manasseh, who ruled for fifty-five years (692-638 B.C.), Amon (638 B.C.), and Josiah (638-608 B.C.).

It was during the reign of Josiah that there occurred an event of far-reaching significance. According to *II Kings* 22:1—23:25, Hilkiah, the high priest, discovered "a book of the law in the house of the LORD" as repairs were being made on the Temple at Jerusalem in 621 B.C. The book was carried to Josiah, who, upon hearing it read, was greatly moved as he heard its indictment of conditions as they prevailed in Judah. Being assured by "Huldah the prophetess" that the book indeed revealed the word of God, the king read it before "all the people."

> "And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book; and all the people joined in the covenant." (*II Kings* 23:3)

Thereupon Josiah inaugurated an extensive reform based upon the emphases found in the newly-discovered document:

> "And the king commanded Hilkiah, the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. And he deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places at the cities of Judah and round about Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the host of the heavens. . . . And he broke down the

houses of the cult prostitutes which were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on one's left at the gate of the city. . . . And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech. . . .

"Moreover Josiah put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD." (*II Kings* 23:4,5,7,8,10,24)

The nature of these reforms offers clear indication of the extent to which Hebrew life had been influenced by pagan practices and superstitions.

It is generally agreed that the book which was discovered is to be identified with what is called the D document (see the introduction to Chapter I). This document included at least the material now to be found in chapters 12—26 and chapter 28 of the book of *Deuteronomy*. The identification is made because the report of the reform in *II Kings* follows closely the emphases which appear in *Deuteronomy:* there is advocated the destruction of all objects associated with the worship of other gods and the abolition of such practices as child sacrifice; it is demanded that all the "high places" of the land be destroyed and the worship of Jahweh be centralized at the Temple in Jerusalem; the priests from the high places are to be brought to Jerusalem (and seem to be regarded as an hereditary group descended from Levi (see Note 68 in Chapter V). Altogether the D document was intended to purify Hebrew religion in accordance with the earlier prophetic emphases. The priestly idea was retained (there are numerous laws pertaining to cult practices), but care was taken to eliminate the evils previously associated with the priestly function. The formal acceptance of the book, reported above, meant that a written document now becomes, for the first time, authoritative "scripture." Since the document purports to reproduce the words of Moses himself (though actually written shortly before 621 B.C., perhaps during the reign of Manasseh), its authoritative character was thus enhanced.

Jeremiah witnessed this religious development in Judah and seems to have been profoundly influenced by it (as shall be seen). The prophet also witnessed the approaching crisis in the political life of the nation. As Babylonian power increased, Jehoiakim (608-597 B.C.), the son of Josiah, for a time pledged his allegiance to Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian king. A short time later, however, he rebelled, and Nebuchadrezzar advanced towards Jerusalem. According to *II Kings* 24:8—25:21 the city was besieged. Destruction was avoided by the surrender (in 597 B.C.) of Jehoiachin, who, in the meanwhile, had succeeded his father, Jehoiakim. Nebuchadrezzar (called Nebuchadnezzar in *II Kings)* "carried off all the treasures" of the Temple and deported into Babylonia not only Jehoiachin and his family but also many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem ("none remained, except the poorest people of the land"). Nebuchadrezzar then placed upon the throne of Judah a certain Mattaniah, "Jehoiachin's uncle, . . . and changed his name to Zedekiah." For a time Zedekiah remained loyal to Babylonia. When he revolted, however, Nebuchadrezzar once more besieged Jerusalem. The fall of the city is described as follows:

"On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then a breach was

made in the city; the king with all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence upon him. They slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and took him to Babylon.

"In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile. But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen." (*II Kings* 25:3-12)

Thus in 586 B.C. the southern Kingdom of Judah came to an end.

The words which come from Jeremiah reflect the impact which all of these events made upon him. His chief concern, however, was not with outward conditions, for the very nature of those conditions seemed to drive him to the recognition of something vastly more important. Of fundamental significance, for him, was *personal* religion,—a right relationship between the spirit of the individual and his God. Earlier prophets had declared that ethical conduct was far more important than ceremony and sacrifice. Jeremiah's experiences and thought led him to a still more profound truth,—that behind ethical conduct lie inner attitudes and motives which must, first of all, be right. For a time, it is true, Jeremiah seemed to give his support to the reform of Josiah in the hope that it would help to restore the people's obedience and loyalty to Jahweh. But as time elapsed he became increasingly convinced that true religion and right conduct could not be imposed upon men simply by adopting certain laws for outward conduct. There is necessary, above all else, the personal response of the individual mind and heart to the will of God. There must be a "*new* covenant,"—a new relationship between the inner life of man and the Spirit of God, not simply a covenant (as that of Mount Sinai) involving conformity to laws for outward action. Jeremiah may thus be called the prophet of inner, personal religion.

Jeremiah's own life demonstrated what personal religion can mean. He suffered deeply and intensely because of the conditions which he faced and because of the hostility of his countrymen. But through it all he received boundless courage and strength from his sense of personal fellowship with God.

The book of *Jeremiah* contains three types of material: (1) the prophecies of Jeremiah himself, probably dictated to his scribe (and friend) Baruch; (2) narratives about Jeremiah, generally ascribed to Baruch; and (3) additions to the text by other (later) authors and editors.

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH—Jeremiah 1:4-10

1:4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,
5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;[1]
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."[2]
6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for
7 I am only a youth." But the LORD said to me,
"Do not say, 'I am only a youth';
for to all to whom I send you you shall go,
and whatever I command you you shall speak.
8 Be not afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD."
9 Then the LORD put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the
LORD said to me,
"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.[3]
10 See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant."[4]

TWO VISIONS—Jeremiah 1:11-15

1:11 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you
12 see?" And I said, "I see a rod of almond." Then the LORD said to me,
"You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."[5]
13 The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, "What do you
14 see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot,[6] facing away from the north." Then
the LORD said to me, "Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all
15 the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I am calling all the tribes of the
kingdoms of the north, says the LORD; and they shall come and every one

1. Jeremiah feels that even before his birth God had set him apart as His agent and prophet. (A somewhat different interpretation has been suggested: Before he was born his mother may have dedicated him to the service of Jahweh.)

2. This indicates Jeremiah's broad (international) outlook.

3. Here we see the prophet's feeling of direct and personal relationship with God. Compare the "call" of Isaiah (especially *Isaiah* 6:6-7, in Chapter XIII), where the sense of the divine presence is less personal and intimate.

4. That is, Jeremiah's message is to include not only condemnation, but also elements of a constructive nature.

5. This vision involves a word-play. The "almond" suggests that Jahweh is "watching," for in Hebrew the two words are similar.

6. The "boiling pot" facing from the north suggests to Jeremiah an invasion from that direction (perhaps of the Scythians, who at that time constituted a threat to Judah).

shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls round about, and against all the cities of Judah."

LAMENT OVER JUDAH—Jeremiah 8:18—9:9

8:18 My grief is beyond healing,
my heart is sick within me.
19 Hark, the cry of the daughter of my people[7]
from the length and breadth of the land:
"Is the LORD not in Zion?
Is her King not in her?"[8]
"Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images,
and with their foreign idols?"
20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
and we are not saved."
21 For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded,*
I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.[9]

22 Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has the health of the daughter of my people
not been restored?[10]
9:1 O that my head were waters,
and my eyes a fountain of tears,
that I might weep day and night
for the slain of the daughter of my people![11]
2 O that I had in the desert
a wayfarers' lodging place,
that I might leave my people
and go away from them!
For they are all adulterers,
a company of treacherous men.
3 They bend their tongue like a bow;[12]

7. The "daughter of my people" means the people themselves,—Judah.

8. That is, "Is Jahweh no longer in Zion (Jerusalem)?" Has He deserted His people? The following two lines (Jahweh speaking) suggest that Judah's sin, not Jahweh's absence, is the cause of the evil conditions.

9. That is, Jeremiah is grieved ("wounded") because of the evil conditions in Judah.

10. This verse means, "Is there no remedy to heal the wounds of my people?" ("Balm," a product of Gilead, was evidently used for medicinal purposes.)

11. There is seen here the sensitive nature of Jeremiah and the depth of his grief over the conditions in Judah. (The "lament" really ends at this point; what follows is a description of the peoples' sins.)

12. That is, their tongues are like bows, shooting "deadly arrows" (verse 8) of slander at their neighbors.

falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land;
for they proceed from evil to evil,
and they do not know me, says the LORD.

4 Let every one beware of his neighbor,
and put no trust in any brother;
for every brother is a supplanter,[13]
and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.
5 Every one deceives his neighbor,
and no one speaks the truth;
they have taught their tongue to speak lies;
they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent.
6 Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit,
they refuse to know me, says the LORD.

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Behold, I will refine them and test them,
for what else can I do, because of my people?
8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceitfully;
with his mouth each speaks peaceably to his neighbor,
but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.
9 Shall I not punish them for these things? says the LORD;
and shall I not avenge myself
on a nation such as this?"

JEREMIAH AND THE DEUTERONOMIC REFORM[14]

Jeremiah 11

11:1,2 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Hear the words
of this covenant,[15] and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of
3 Jerusalem. You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel:
4 Cursed be the man who does not heed the words of this covenant which I
commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt,

13. The Hebrew word for "supplant" is the same as the name of Jacob. The reference is an allusion to Jacob's treacherous dealings with Esau, and means that every brother is like Jacob. See Notes 1 and 2 in Chapter III.

14. This passage suggests that when Josiah attempted to carry out his reforms in accordance with the newly-discovered book of *Deuteronomy* (see the introduction to this chapter), Jeremiah at first gave his whole-hearted support to the movement. In this material we see him speaking in behalf of the reform.

15. "This covenant" seems to refer to the "covenant" as described in the D document.

from the iron furnace,[16] saying, Listen to my voice, and do all that I
5 command you. So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, that I
may perform the oath which I swore to your fathers to give them a land
flowing with milk and honey, as at this day." Then I answered, "So be it,
LORD."

6 And the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of
Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words of this covenant
7 and do them. For I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them
up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently, even to this day,
8 saying, Obey my voice. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but
every one walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I
brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded
them to do, but they did not."

9 Again the LORD said to me, "There is revolt among the men of Judah
10 and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned back to the iniqui-
ties of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words; they have gone
after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah
11 have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. Therefore,
thus says the LORD, Behold, I am bringing evil upon them which they
12 cannot escape; though they cry to me, I will not listen to them. Then the
cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the
gods to whom they burn incense, but they cannot save them in the time
13 of their trouble. For your gods have become as many as your cities, O
Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set
up to shame, altars to burn incense to Baal.

14 "Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on
their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their
15 trouble.[17] What right has my beloved in my house, when she has done
vile deeds? Can vows and sacrificial flesh avert your doom? Can you then
16 exult? The LORD once called you, 'A green olive tree, fair with goodly
fruit'; but with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its
17 branches will be consumed. The LORD of hosts, who planted you, has
pronounced evil against you, because of the evil which the house of
Israel and the house of Judah have done, provoking me to anger by
burning incense to Baal."

18 The LORD made it known to me and I knew;
then thou didst show me their evil deeds.[18]

16. The "iron furnace" is a figure of speech suggesting the Egyptian bondage.

17. That is, the sins of the people are so great that prayers in their behalf will be in vain.

18. This refers to a secret plot against Jeremiah's life in his native town, Anathoth (see verse 21). The people there evidently resented his support of a reform which would abolish their local shrine.

19 But I was like a gentle lamb
led to the slaughter.
I did not know it was against me
they devised schemes, saying,
"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more."[19]
20 But, O LORD of hosts, who judgest righteously,
who triest the heart and the mind,
let me see thy vengeance upon them,
for to thee have I committed my cause.[20]

21 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, or you
22 will die by our hand"—therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will punish them; the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and
23 their daughters shall die by famine; and none of them shall be left. For I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment."

JEREMIAH'S PROBLEM[21]—Jeremiah 12:1-6

12:1 Righteous art thou, O LORD,
when I complain to thee;
yet I would plead my case before thee.
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?[22]
2 Thou plantest them, and they take root;
they grow and bring forth fruit;
thou art near in their mouth
and far from their heart.[23]
3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me;
thou seest me, and triest my mind toward thee.
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,
and set them apart for the day of slaughter.
4 How long will the land mourn,
and the grass of every field wither?

19. The people are referring here, of course, to Jeremiah.

20. That is, Jeremiah trusts God, "who judgest righteously," and who knows men's inmost thoughts, to deal with his enemies.

21. In this passage Jeremiah raises a question which has troubled persons in all generations: If God is just and good, why do the wicked prosper? Jeremiah senses the apparent injustice in this situation.

22. In this verse Jeremiah acknowledges Jahweh to be a righteous and just God, yet he feels compelled to seek an explanation for the apparent injustice.

23. Outwardly the wicked are religious, but inwardly they are not.

For the wickedness of those who dwell in it
the beasts and the birds are swept away,
because men said, "He will not see our latter end."[24]

5 "If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you,
how will you compete with horses?
And if in a safe land you fall down,
how will you do in the jungle of the Jordan?[25]
6 For even your brothers and the house of your father,
even they have dealt treacherously with you;
they are in full cry after you;
believe them not,
though they speak fair words to you."

THE SPEECH AT THE TEMPLE GATE[26]

Jeremiah 7:1-28; 8:4-12

7:1,2 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the 3 LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways 4 and your doings, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'[27]

5 "For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly exe- 6 cute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not

24. Or (according to the Greek version), "God does not see our ways." Some scholars consider verses 3 and 4 not to be the words of Jeremiah himself. The following verses (5 and 6) present Jahweh's reply.

25. In these words we have, not a real answer to Jeremiah's question, but a challenge: If Jeremiah falters (is "wearied") because of present hardships and problems, how shall he face still greater trials? The prophet is to continue his work regardless of the consequences.

26. The address of Jeremiah reported here was uttered early in the reign of Jehoiakim (608-597 B.C.). By this time the prophet perceives that at best the reform of Josiah had produced only superficial results. It is true that the evil practices connected with the worship at the "high places" had been eliminated when those shrines were abolished. But the mere transferring of all worship to the Temple at Jerusalem had brought about only an outward change. The minds and hearts of the people had not been affected, and their conduct remained unaltered. In fact, the importance now attached to the Temple had only added to their complacency and to their confidence that its outward forms of worship would save them.

27. The thrice-repeated phrase conveys the idea that the people look upon the Temple itself as sufficient assurance of the divine favor.

7 go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this
place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever.
8,9 "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal,
murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and go
10 after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand
before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are
11 delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house,
which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?[28] Be-
12 hold, I myself have seen it, says the LORD. Go now to my place that was
in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it
13 for the wickedness of my people Israel.[29] And now, because you have done
all these things, says the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you
14 did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I
will do to the house which is called by my name, and in which you trust,
and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to
15 Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen,
all the offspring of Ephraim.
16 "As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up cry or prayer for
17 them, and do not intercede with me, for I do not hear you.[30] Do you
not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of
18 Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the
women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven;[31] and they
19 pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger. Is it I
whom they provoke? says the LORD. Is it not themselves, to their own
20 confusion?[32] Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, my anger and
my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon
the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be
quenched."
21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt of-
22 ferings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.[33] For in the day that I brought
them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or com-
23 mand them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command
I gave them, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be

28. That is, "Is this Temple simply a place of refuge for wrong-doers (as a cave is for robbers)?"

29. Jeremiah is preparing to say that the Temple will be destroyed just as was the sanctuary at Shiloh. See Note 2 in Chapter VII.

30. See Note 17 in this chapter and the passage which it explains *(Jeremiah* 11:14).

31. The "queen of heaven" refers to the Assyrian-Babylonian goddess, Ishtar (or Astarte), whose worship seems to have been introduced in Judah.

32. If the people think that they are only provoking Jahweh they are mistaken; they are also bringing shame upon themselves.

33. This seems to mean that, in so far as Jahweh is concerned, the people may eat the flesh even of animals sacrificed as burnt-offerings (usually reserved entirely for deity); Jahweh's real concern is not with such matters.

my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be
24 well with you.' But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in
their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went
25 backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of
the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the
26 prophets to them, day after day; yet they did not listen to me, or incline
their ear, but stiffened their neck.[34] They did worse than their fathers.[35]
27 "So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen
28 to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you
shall say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the
LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is
cut off from their lips.'[36]

8:4 "You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD:
When men fall, do they not rise again?
If one turns away, does he not return?
5 Why then has this people turned away
in perpetual backsliding?
They hold fast to deceit,
they refuse to return.
6 I have given heed and listened,
but they have not spoken aright;
no man repents of his wickedness,
saying, 'What have I done?'
Every one turns to his own course,
like a horse plunging headlong into battle.
7 Even the stork in the heavens
knows her times;
and the turtledove, swallow, and crane
keep the time of their coming;
but my people know not
the ordinance of the LORD.[37]

8 "How can you say, 'We are wise,
and the law of the LORD is with us'?
But, behold, the false pen of the scribes
has made it into a lie.

34. To say that the people "stiffened their neck" means that they were stubborn, unbending, impenitent.

35. The words in this paragraph are intended to emphasize the *moral* requirements of Jahweh as over against the ceremonial (sacrificial).

36. Some scholars do not regard the following verses as a part of the speech at the Temple gate.

37. The birds know and respond to the migratory urge. Judah fails to show a similar regard for the law of Jahweh.

9 The wise men[38] shall be put to shame,
they shall be dismayed and taken;
lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD,
and what wisdom is in them?
10 Therefore I will give their wives to others
and their fields to conquerors,
because from the least to the greatest
every one is greedy for unjust gain;
from prophet to priest
every one deals falsely.
11 They have healed the wound of my people lightly,
saying, 'Peace, peace,'
when there is no peace.[39]
12 Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?
No, they were not at all ashamed;
they did not know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among the fallen;
when I punish them, they shall be overthrown,"
says the LORD.

THE RESULT OF THE SPEECH[40]—Jeremiah 26:1-19

26:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king
2 of Judah,[41] this word came from the LORD, "Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah which come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command
3 you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may repent of the evil which
4 I intend to do to them because of their evil doings. You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law
5 which I have set before you, and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not heeded,
6 then I will make this house like Shiloh,[42] and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.' "

38. Jeremiah here seems to condemn the priests for their superficial (and hence false) conduct in connection with the Deuteronomic reform. Changes in outward worship alone can never transform human life.

39. This verse again stresses the superficiality of the reform. The evils ("wound") of the nation have been "healed" only slightly ("lightly"); the leaders assert that all is now well, when all is *not* well. Morally and spiritually the people are unchanged.

Altogether this part of the material seems to indicate that Jeremiah no longer regarded the reform as highly as at first.

40. Although in the book of *Jeremiah* this account does not follow the speech at the Temple gate, references in it show that it deals with the occasion of that speech.

41. See Note 26 in this chapter.

42. See *Jeremiah* 7:12-15 in the preceding section (and Note 29).

7 The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak-
8 ing these words in the house of the LORD. And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid
9 hold of him, saying, "You shall die! Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant'?" And all the people gathered about Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10 When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of
11 the New Gate of the house of the LORD. Then the priests and the prophets said to the princes and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."[43]

12 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the
13 words you have heard. Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will repent of the
14 evil which he has pronounced against you. But as for me, behold, I am
15 in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

16 Then the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to
17 us in the name of the LORD our God." And certain of the elders of the
18 land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts,

Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.'[44]

19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD

43. Jeremiah's words appear to the priests and (false) prophets as subversive utterances. These men cannot understand that the prophet is really concerned for the nation's *welfare* under God.

44. For a reference to the prophet Micah see Note 64 in Chapter XIII. Micah, like Jeremiah, had foreseen doom for the nation unless changes occurred within it. The following verse here (19) refers to certain reforms which had been carried out by the king of Judah in Micah's time.

repent of the evil which he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great evil upon ourselves."[45]

JEREMIAH IN THE STOCKS—Jeremiah 20

20:1 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in
2 the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things.[46] Then
Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were
3 in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the LORD. On the morrow,
when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him,
"The LORD does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on every side.
4 For thus says the LORD: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to
all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you
look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon;
he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall slay them with the
5 sword. Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its
prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the
hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them, and seize them, and
6 carry them to Babylon. And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your
house, shall go into captivity; to Babylon you shall go; and there you
shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to
whom you have prophesied falsely."

7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me,
and I was deceived;
thou art stronger than I,
and thou hast prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all the day;
every one mocks me.[47]
8 For whenever I speak, I cry out,
I shout, "Violence and destruction!"
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
9 If I say, "I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,"

45. Thus the recalling of the utterances of Micah, and of the effect which that prophet's words had produced, leads the princes to spare Jeremiah's life.

46. Pashhur seems to have been responsible for preserving order in the Temple. "These things" refers to previous utterances of Jeremiah concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah had been told to dramatize his words by breaking an earthen flask symbolizing the city and its inhabitants (*Jeremiah* 19, omitted here).

47. This verse and those which follow reveal more clearly than any others the nature of Jeremiah's personality and the inner struggles which he faces. He has obeyed the divine command and has proclaimed the message of Jahweh, but it is a message which gives him deep sorrow and pain.

there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.[48]
10 For I hear many whispering.
Terror is on every side![49]
"Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
say all my familiar friends,
watching for my fall.
"Perhaps he will be deceived,
then we can overcome him,
and take our revenge on him."
11 But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble,
they will not overcome me.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.
12 O LORD of hosts, who triest the righteous,
who seest the heart and the mind,
let me see thy vengeance upon them,
for to thee have I committed my cause.

13 Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hand of evildoers.[50]

14 Cursed be the day
on which I was born!
The day when my mother bore me,
let it not be blessed!
15 Cursed be the man
who brought the news to my father,
"A son is born to you,"
making him very glad.
16 Let that man be like the cities
which the LORD overthrew without pity;

48. Even though he might wish to remain silent (and thereby enjoy the peace for which he longs), an inner compulsion forces him to speak.
49. That is, he knows of plots against him.
50. Verses 12 and 13 are regarded by some scholars as misplaced fragments of material.

let him hear a cry in the morning
and an alarm at noon,
17 because he did not kill me in the womb;
so my mother would have been my grave,
and her womb for ever great.[51]
18 Why did I come forth from the womb
to see toil and sorrow,
and spend my days in shame?[52]

THE RECORDING OF JEREMIAH'S UTTERANCES

Jeremiah 36

36:1 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this
2 word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until
3 today. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I intend to do to them, so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."
4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote upon a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD which
5 he had spoken to him. And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, "I am
6 debarred from going to the house of the LORD;[53] so you are to go, and on a fast day in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll which you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah
7 who come out of their cities. It may be that their supplication will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people."
8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did all that Jeremiah the prophet ordered him about reading from the scroll the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.
9 In the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD.
10 Then, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read the words of Jeremiah

51. His mother's womb would have remained "great" if the child had never come forth from it.

52. The nobility of Jeremiah is seen in the fact that in spite of the sorrow and shame which faces him he continues to proclaim his message, strengthened and encouraged by his sense of the divine presence.

53. Jeremiah is now forbidden to enter the Temple, perhaps as a result of the clash with Pashhur, reported in the previous section.

from the scroll, in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house.

11 When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the
12 words of the LORD from the scroll, he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber; and all the princes were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the
13 princes. And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard, when
14 Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people. Then all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi, to say to Baruch, "Take in your hand the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his
15 hand and came to them. And they said to him, "Sit down and read it."
16 So Baruch read it to them. When they heard all the words, they turned to one another in fear; and they said to Baruch, "We must report all these
17 words to the king." Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, how did you write
18 all these words? Was it at his dictation?" Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll."
19 Then the princes said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are."

20 So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary; and they reported all the words to
21 the king. Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary; and Jehudi read it to the king and
22 all the princes who stood beside the king. It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter house and there was a fire burning in the
23 brazier before him. As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier.
24 Yet neither the king, nor any of his servants who heard all these words,
25 was afraid, nor did they rend their garments. Even when Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would
26 not listen to them. And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son and Seraiah the son of Azriel and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

27 Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah:
28 "Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in
29 the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah you shall say, 'Thus says the LORD, You have burned this scroll, saying, "Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut
30 off from it man and beast?" Therefore thus says the LORD concerning

Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the
31 frost by night. And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity; I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear.' "

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them.[54]

THE BASKET OF FIGS[55]—Jeremiah 24

24:1 After Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah[56] the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the princes of Judah, the craftsmen, and the smiths, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me this vision: Behold, two baskets of
2 figs placed before the temple of the LORD. One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they
3 could not be eaten. And the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I said, "Figs, the good figs very good, and the bad figs very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten."

4,5 Then the word of the LORD came to me: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chal-
6 deans.[57] I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant
7 them, and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

8 "But thus says the LORD: Like the bad figs which are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the
9 land of Egypt.[58] I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the

54. The document which Baruch now writes is usually regarded as forming the basis of the present book of *Jeremiah*.

55. When Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B.C. (see the introduction to this chapter), a number of the leaders of Judah were taken to Babylonia as captives. The words given here were uttered by Jeremiah soon after this occasion.

56. This is a form of the name Jehoiachin.

57. That is, the good figs represent the captives, whom Jahweh regards with special favor ("as good").

58. That is, the bad figs represent those remaining in Jerusalem. (The reference to "those who dwell in the land of Egypt" is not entirely clear. Perhaps it refers to some who had been taken into Egypt when "Pharaoh Neco," according to *II Kings* 23:28-35, overran Palestine temporarily, killing Josiah in battle and placing Jehoiakim upon the throne of Judah.)

earth, to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places
10 where I shall drive them. And I will send sword, famine, and pestilence
upon them, until they shall be utterly destroyed from the land which I
gave to them and their fathers."[59]

JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO THE EXILES

Jeremiah 29: 1-14a

29:1 These are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent
from Jerusalem to the elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets,
and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from
2 Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen
mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen,
3 and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the
hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah,
whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king
4 of Babylon. It said: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to
all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:
5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.
6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and
give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters;
7 multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city
where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for
8 in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are
among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they
9 dream, for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you in my name; I
did not send them, says the LORD.[60]
10 "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years[61] are completed for
Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring
11 you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD,
12 plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then
13 you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You
14a will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will
be found by you, says the LORD."[62]

59. In these words Jeremiah expresses his conviction that there is greater hope for the exiles than for those remaining in Jerusalem. Perhaps his thought is that the exiles, having endured suffering, and no longer being able to rely on false ideas of security, will be in a better position to recognize the ultimate realities and values.

60. In verses 8 and 9 Jeremiah is warning the exiles against those who are counseling rebellion against Babylonia.

61. "Seventy years" is probably intended as a round number only.

62. In this letter the prophet is attempting to encourage the exiles to be loyal to

JEREMIAH IN THE CISTERN[63]—Jeremiah 38:1-13,28

38:1 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur,
Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the
2 words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, "Thus says the LORD,
He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by
pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live; he shall have
3 his life as a prize of war, and live. Thus says the LORD, This city shall
surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be
4 taken."[64] Then the princes said to the king, "Let this man be put to death,
for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and
the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man
5 is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm." King Zedekiah
said, "Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can do nothing against
6 you." So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah,
the king's son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah
down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mire, and
Jeremiah sank in the mire.
7 When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king's
house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—the king was
8 sitting in the Benjamin Gate—Ebed-melech went from the king's house
9 and said to the king, "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all
that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern;
and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city."
10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, "Take three
men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern
11 before he dies." So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the
house of the king, to a wardrobe of the storehouse, and took from there
old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the
12 cistern by ropes. Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah,
"Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes." Jeremiah
13 did so. Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the
cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard."

28 . . . . And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day
that Jerusalem was taken.[65]

Jahweh. For even though they are in a foreign land, far removed from the Temple (and therefore, in the opinion of many, beyond the reach of the divine favor), yet Jahweh's thoughts *are* with them (verse 11), and they *can* pray to Him (verse 7).

63. The events described here occurred shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

64. Jeremiah has been urging submission to Babylonia. Not only does he recognize the hopelessness of resistance, but also he is confident that in the long run this policy would be best for Judah and for religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should be accused of treason and of destroying the popular morale (verse 4). Compare Note 43.

65. Jeremiah's warnings against resistance to Babylonia proved to be justified. In 586

THE NEW COVENANT[66]—Jeremiah 31:27-34

31:27 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the
28 seed of beast. And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil,
29 so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. In those days they shall no longer say:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge.'

30 But every one shall die for his own sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.[67]
31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new
32 covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke,
33 though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will
34 be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."[68]

B.C., as indicated earlier, Jerusalem was destroyed and large numbers of the inhabitants were deported into Babylonia. Some who were allowed to remain finally decided to flee into Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them (against his will). There he died.

66. The idea of the "new covenant" is the most distinctive aspect of Jeremiah's thought and message. This passage constitutes a fitting conclusion for this chapter.

67. In verses 29 and 30 Jeremiah is denying the validity of a contemporary saying which meant: The fathers have sinned, and the children pay the penalty. The prophet insists that men are not judged simply as members of the nation as a whole; they are judged, rather, on the basis of their own *individual* conduct. This is entirely in harmony with his conviction that religion is primarily a matter of the mind and heart.

68. Earlier prophets had emphasized the fact that right conduct (justice and righteousness) is far more important than outward forms and ceremonies. Jeremiah recognizes a yet deeper truth. Underlying all true religion and life there must be right minds and hearts. There must be a *new* covenant,—a *new* relationship between the inner spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Whereas the (old) covenant at Mount Sinai involved essentially the matter of conformity to specified laws for conduct, the *new* covenant is of a much deeper and inward nature. (See again the introduction to this chapter.) When Christians, later, gathered together their body of "scripture," they used Jeremiah's phrase as title,—the New Covenant (sometimes called the New Testament—the Greek word means both), —because they believed that through Jesus there had been made possible the kind of relationship which Jeremiah anticipated.

CHAPTER XV

EZEKIEL (593–570 B.C.)

At the present time there is considerable diversity of opinion among scholars as to the time when the book of *Ezekiel* was written. According to the view which has generally been held, however, it represents the work of a man named Ezekiel, who was a member of the official priesthood at Jerusalem when that city surrendered to Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B.C. In all probability he was one of the first Hebrew captives carried into Babylonia at that time; it was thus as an exile that he uttered his message. (Some scholars believe that he was not deported until after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. If this is true, then it must be assumed that a later editor was responsible for the apparent Babylonian setting provided in some parts of the present book of *Ezekiel*. One proposal includes the suggestion that although he was deported in 597 B.C., he was allowed to travel back to Jerusalem shortly before 586 B.C. In this case his prophetic activity must have occurred partly in Palestine and partly in Babylonia.)

It was indeed a disheartening situation which the prophet faced. The calamity which had befallen his people was a religious as well as a political one. Not only had the exiles been removed from their native land; they also felt that they had been removed from their God, for the idea of the territorial limitation of Jahweh's activity and presence continued to prevail. And since the Deuteronomic reform had designated the Temple at Jerusalem as the only place where there could be true worship, it was generally assumed that captivity in Babylonia involved separation from Jahweh's presence and power. Although Jeremiah had attacked this view it remained for Ezekiel further to convince his people that Jahweh was still their God and thus to keep alive Hebrew religion.

Ezekiel's message is dominated by the thought of the transcendence of Jahweh and of Jahweh's supremacy even in Babylonia. Hence this prophet gives new impetus, in a most critical time, to the idea of a universal God. Earlier prophets, it is true, had spoken of the universality of Jahweh; but were it not for Ezekiel's further development of this idea the history of Hebrew religion might well have been vastly different from that which is known today. Had there not been established the conviction that Jahweh's activity extended beyond the borders of Palestine, the worship of Jahweh might well have ceased among the most important and influential Hebrews (the exiles).

One of the most important elements in the message of Ezekiel is his idea of the value of the individual. Jeremiah, before him, expressed the thought when he insisted that religion is primarily a matter of personal relationship to God. Ezekiel, however, goes much further in this. He emphasizes the individual's responsibility to God and proclaims that God judges the individual rather than the nation as a whole.

Another significant aspect of Ezekiel's teaching is his message of hope. His is the first distinct and elaborate picture of an earthly kingdom of God. He describes in considerable detail the conditions which will prevail when the nation is revived and restored. Israel's enemies shall be no more, prosperity shall be attained, and Jahweh Himself shall come to rule over His people in visible glory.

Ezekiel has been called the "father of Judaism." Before the Exile it was the Hebrew *nation* which had united the people, although religion, of course, had played an important role in this regard. But with the destruction of Jerusalem the nation had come to an end. Usually, in the history of the world, the loss of a nation has brought to an end the existence of its inhabitants as a distinct people. Such was not true in the case of the Hebrews. Unity was preserved because, through the work of men like Ezekiel, another

rallying point or center of interest was provided, namely, the Jewish Church (Judaism). Through Ezekiel religion (Judaism) became the means of keeping the people intact even after the state had disappeared. This was possible because the prophet made of religion something outward and visible,—something which would bind the people together and unite them by causing them to participate in common practices and *forms* of worship. He seemed to feel the need of objective rules and principles. Perhaps he believed that ritualism was a requirement of Jahweh Himself. Perhaps, on the other hand, he believed simply that ritualism was necessary in order to assure the survival of the more prophetic ideas and convictions which had come to characterize the religion of Israel. In any case, he emphasized, as no other prophet had done, the various forms of ritualism and legalism which came to distinguish Judaism from other religions. It is for this reason that many speak of him as the "father of Judaism." (The last part of the book of *Ezekiel* is given over to the ritualistic and ceremonial regulations which the prophet prescribed. The material is not reproduced in this chapter because it adds but little to an understanding of the religious ideas with which we are especially concerned.) We may now begin to use the religious term, *Jew* (a follower of Judaism), as well as the racial term, *Hebrew*.

In several ways the book of *Ezekiel* prepares the way for a type of writing known as apocalyptic literature (see Chapter XIX). The picture of a future earthly kingdom of God, the prediction of direct divine intervention in the affairs of this world, and the extensive use of symbolic imagery are all features which were later developed and combined in apocalypticism.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD—Ezekiel 18

18:1,2 The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have
3 eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.
4 Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die.[1]
5,6 "If a man is righteous and does what is lawful and right—if he does not eat upon the mountains[2] or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her
7 time of impurity, does not oppress any one, but restores to the debtor his pledge,[3] commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers
8 the naked with a garment, does not lend at interest or take any increase,[4]

1. Ezekiel here takes up the thought of Jeremiah (turn back to *Jeremiah* 31:29-30), and carries it much further (as is indicated by the following verses). In the people's use of the proverb they seem to imply that God is somewhat unfair in making them suffer for the sins of their ancestors. Furthermore, if they must thus suffer, what hope can there be for them? In denying the idea expressed by the proverb Ezekiel is therefore doing two things: (1) he is vindicating the justice and fairness of Jahweh by insisting that He judges every individual on the basis of his *own* life (*"the soul that sins* shall die"); and (2) he is holding out the hope that there yet remains the opportunity for all men to "turn, and live" (verse 32, below), for the individual's present conduct, not the past, determines his fate.

2. That is, does not participate in sacrificial feasts at the "high places" (which had been condemned in *Deuteronomy*).

3. See Note 22 in Chapter XI.

4. Taking interest on "charitable loans" is thus condemned. Interest on business investments is apparently not involved here.

withholds his hand from iniquity, executes true justice between man and
9 man, walks in my statutes, and is careful to observe my ordinances—he is
righteous, he shall surely live, says the Lord GOD.
10 "If he begets a son who is a robber, a shedder of blood, who does none
11 of these duties, but eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife,
12 oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the
13 pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination,[5] lends at interest, and takes increase; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominable things; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.
14 "But if this man begets a son who sees all the sins which his father
15 has done, and fears, and does not do likewise, who does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does
16 not defile his neighbor's wife, does not wrong any one, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the
17 naked with a garment, withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or increase, observes my ordinances, and walks in my statutes; he shall not
18 die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live. As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.
19 "Yet you say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is lawful and right, and has been
20 careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.
21 "But if a wicked man turns away from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is lawful and right,
22 he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness
23 which he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his
24 way and live? But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and does the same abominable things that the wicked man does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds which he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, he shall die.[6]
25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.'[7] Hear now, O house

5. That is, engages in idolatrous practices.
6. Here Ezekiel declares that a man is not judged even on the basis of his own *past*, either his own past sins (verses 21 and 22) or his own past righteousness (verse 24); it is his *present* life that counts.
7. That is, Jahweh is unfair. See Note 1.

26 of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a
righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity,
he shall die for it; for the iniquity which he has committed he shall die.
27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has com-
28 mitted and does what is lawful and right, he shall save his life. Because
he considered and turned away from all the transgressions which he had
29 committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel
says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not
just? Is it not your ways that are not just?
30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to
his ways, says the Lord GOD.[8] Repent and turn from all your transgres-
31 sions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgres-
sions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new
32 heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have
no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord GOD; so turn, and
live."[9]

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE SHEEP—Ezekiel 34

34:1,2 The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man,[10] prophesy against
the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds,
Thus says the Lord GOD: Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding
3 yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?[11] You eat the fat, you
clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you
4 do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick
you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed
you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force

8. In other words, says Ezekiel, Jahweh's ways *are* fair and just, for He judges everyone "according to his *(own)* ways."

9. In verses 31 and 32 Ezekiel appeals to the people to respond to the hope which this view of *individual* responsibility provides. Here, as in verse 23, he represents God as merciful and forgiving (not harsh and unfair), eagerly desiring to bless men if only they will return to Him.

10. The expression "son of man" indicates a class or category of beings. Sometimes in the Old Testament it means mankind in general. In any case *a* "son of man" is a *man,* a member of the human race, as over against a beast on the one hand, or as over against an angelic (divine) being on the other. That "son of man" means simply "man" is shown with particular clarity in the synonymous parallelism (see the introduction to Chapter XI) of *Psalm* 8:4:

"what is man that thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?"

Recall a similar use of "son" in Amos 7:14 (and see Note 5 in Chapter XI). In later times, as will be seen, the expression "son of man" came to be used differently, though the basic usage also persisted.

11. The "shepherds" are the pre-exilic kings of Judah. (In Babylonia, Assyria, and elsewhere, a king was frequently called the "shepherd" of his people.) These kings have been unworthy shepherds, feeding themselves but not their "sheep" (the people).

5 and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because
there was no shepherd;[12] and they became food for all the wild beasts.
6 My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on
every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth,
with none to search or seek for them.
7,8 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As I live, says
the Lord GOD, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have
become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd; and
because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds
9 have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; therefore, you shepherds,
10 hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against
the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a
stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed
themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may
not be food for them.
11 "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my
12 sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when
some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my
sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been
13 scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them
out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will
bring them into their own land;[13] and I will feed them on the mountains
of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country.
14 I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of
Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing
land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.
15,16 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie
down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the
strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak,
and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice.[14]
17 "As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge be-
18 tween sheep and sheep, rams and he-goats.[15] Is it not enough for you to
feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the
rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must foul the
19 rest with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with
your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?

12. That is, because the kings had not been true shepherds the people were "scattered" in exile by their enemies ("the wild beasts").

13. Thus there is the promise that the exiles shall be returned to their own land.

14. Jahweh Himself will displace the unworthy "shepherds." He will restore Israel and give new life to the nation.

15. In verses 17-22 the attack is upon the evil people among the "flock" (rather than upon the evil "shepherds," as in the earlier verses). These verses may constitute an editorial addition to the original text.

20 "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will
21 judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push
with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till
22 you have scattered them abroad, I will save my flock, they shall no
23 longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will
set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them:
24 he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be
their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD,
have spoken.[16]
25 "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts
from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and
26 sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about
my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season;
27 they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield
their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure
in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the
bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved
28 them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts
of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make
29 them afraid. And I will provide for them prosperous plantations
so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no
30 longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I,
the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are
31 my people, says the Lord GOD. And you are my sheep, the sheep of my
pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord GOD."

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES[17]—Ezekiel 37:1-14

37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the
Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full
2 of bones. And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very
3 many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry.[18] And he said to me,
"Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, thou
4 knowest."[19] Again he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to

16. Jahweh will appoint a sort of deputy-shepherd. The reference to "my servant David" does not mean David himself, but one who will be *like* David. Notice that he will be a "prince," not a king (compare this with Isaiah's figure of the Messiah), for it is Jahweh Himself who shall establish the new order.

17. This is a very famous description of the restoration of the Hebrew nation.

18. The dry bones, of course, symbolize the dead nation.

19. Ezekiel's reply ("thou knowest") to Jahweh's question indicates the prophet's caution; restoration was dependent wholly upon *God's* will and action. (As yet there was no idea of resurrection from the dead for individuals. This account, therefore, concerns the revival of the *nation,* not the resurrection of persons who have died.)

them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD
to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall
live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon
you, and cover you with skin, and put breath[20] in you, and you shall live;
and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a
noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its
bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come
upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.
Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and
say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds,
O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." So I pro-
phesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they
lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of
Israel.[21] Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost;
we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says
the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from
your graves,[22] O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of
Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves,
and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit[23]
within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land;
then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it,
says the LORD."[24]

20. Or, "spirit." In Hebrew the same word is used for "breath" and "spirit." The "breath" or "spirit" of life is meant. This should be kept in mind throughout the passage.

21. This offers an explanation of the meaning of the vision, intended to give hope to the exiles. The "whole house of Israel" includes both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. (A later account in *Ezekiel* describes the re-uniting of the two nations; this is symbolized by the joining of two sticks.)

22. "Graves" symbolizes the Exile.

23. See again Note 20. Here, however, the Spirit of God (rather than the principle of life) is intended.

24. For a review of the message of Ezekiel read again the introduction to this chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

SECOND ISAIAH (c. 540 B.C.)

It has been indicated previously (Chapter XIII) that the present book of *Isaiah* includes not only the utterances of the prophet Isaiah but also the messages of other prophets as well. When the words of Isaiah were edited there was attached to them, and placed in the same volume or scroll, material from documents which must have been anonymous. This material differs from that which comes from Isaiah himself in literary style, in the religious ideas which it presents, and in the historical background which it reflects. For a time scholars believed that the entire latter part of the book of *Isaiah,* chapters 40–66, was the work of a single man. Now, however, it is generally agreed (with a few exceptions) that at least two men were responsible for these chapters, one for chapters 40–55, and another for chapters 56–66. Since their real names are unknown they are commonly designated as Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah. (It is possible that the material ascribed to Third Isaiah actually comes from more than one person, but this possibility need not be discussed here.)

Judging from historical references which appear in *Isaiah* 40–55, it is generally assumed that the author, whom we shall call II Isaiah, lived among the Hebrew exiles in Babylonia at the time when the Persian empire was entering upon a period of conquest and was threatening to put an end to Babylonian domination. About the middle of the sixth century, B.C., Cyrus became king of Persia. After subduing Asia Minor he advanced southward, and in 539 B.C. he succeeded in gaining control of Babylonia. Thus began the Persian period in the world's history, a period which was to continue for some two hundred years. It was shortly before the fall of Babylon that the message of II Isaiah was uttered.

The thought of II Isaiah was dominated by the spirit of hope. He felt that the destruction of the Hebrew nation and the exile in Babylonia had constituted sufficient punishment for Israel's sins. A new era was about to begin. Led by Jahweh the people would soon return to their home in Palestine. As the prophet has expressed it,

> "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
> and come with singing to Zion;
> everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
> they shall obtain joy and gladness,
> and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." *(Isaiah* 51:11)

The basis of II Isaiah's hope was two-fold. On the one hand his hope was founded upon his conception of Jahweh: Israel's God was great enough to restore His people. On the other hand it sprang from his view of international developments: he looked upon Cyrus of Persia as liberator; he believed that the Persian king, after defeating Babylonia, would allow the exiles to return to their native land.

It has just been stated that II Isaiah regarded Jahweh as great enough to restore His people. It is important to observe that this prophet's conception of God is the most advanced that has yet appeared, for in his message we see the first explicit declaration of *absolute monotheism.* Other prophets, it is true, had thought of Jahweh's power as extending throughout the world, but they did not specifically deny the existence of all other gods. II Isaiah leaves no room for doubt. For him Jahweh is the *only* God:

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
'I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.' " *(Isaiah* 44:6)

Jahweh is the Creator of the world. It is He who controls all history. The idols of other nations are but the helpless creations of men's hands. Thus we see in the work of II Isaiah the climax in the development of absolute monotheism.

II Isaiah, furthermore, recognized a logical implication of this view of Jahweh. If Israel's God is indeed the only God and the God of all the world, then it must follow that He is concerned with the welfare of all men everywhere. His affection is not limited to His "chosen people." His kingdom is for *all* persons, regardless of race or nation, who turn their minds and hearts to Him. Hence we see not only monotheism, but also a real *universalism* (universalism in the sense that God has an unlimited concern for the welfare of all men).

The universalism just described is revealed especially in the so-called "Servant Songs," which are included in the prophet's message. In these songs the writer presents his ideal of the "Servant," who shall be a "light to the nations," leading them to a knowledge of God even though, in so doing, he shall be made to suffer for his efforts. Suffering thus becomes something more than mere punishment for sin. When suffering is voluntarily borne for a noble purpose it becomes redemptive, serving the cause of bringing men and nations into right relationship with God.

There is probably no part of the Old Testament which so profoundly influenced the thought and life of Jesus as that which comes from II Isaiah. The ideal of the "Suffering Servant" is the ideal which pervaded and dominated his ministry. The New Testament account of Jesus and his meaning for the world cannot be understood apart from a knowledge of the ideas and emphases of "the Unknown Prophet of the Exile."

A MESSAGE OF HOPE—Isaiah 40

40:1 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,[1]
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,[2]
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.[3]

3 A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.[4]

1. "Jerusalem" is here the personification of all Israel.

2. Or, to suggest the underlying thought, "that her period of bondage (exile) is at an end."

3. That is, punishment has now been completed. Since this is true there is now a basis for hope, and the prophet may utter a message of "comfort."

4. Here the imagery is based upon the Babylonian custom of clearing the road for a

4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people is grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.[5]

9 Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion,[6] herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!"
10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.[7]

journey of the king. Jahweh's way is to be prepared (made "straight" and "level"), for, with the exiles, He is about to return (through the desert) to reveal Himself once more in Jerusalem.

5. The prophet here stresses the eternal greatness of God by showing the contrast between this and the transitory nature of man's life. (This paragraph may have stood originally between verses 11 and 12.)

6. "Zion" (like "Jerusalem") personifies all Israel. See Note 1.

7. This paragraph (verses 9-11) continues the thought of verses 3-5: Jahweh has returned to His people to lead them back home. In the following verses the prophet describes the transcendent power and wisdom of Jahweh, showing thus that He is able (great enough) to bring about this deliverance from exile.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?
13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
or as his counselor has instructed him?
14 Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice,
and taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding?[8]
15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as the dust on the scales;
behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust.
16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,
nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.
17 All the nations are as nothing before him,
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

18 To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?
19 The idol! a workman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,
and casts for it silver chains.
20 He who is impoverished chooses for an offering
wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skilful craftsman
to set up an image that will not move.[9]

21 Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;
23 who brings princes to nought,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

8. The answer implied in these questions is "No one": Jahweh stands above *all* in His power and wisdom.

9. In contrast to the greatness of God are the idols (of gold or of wood), the work of men's hands.

24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

25 To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high and see:[10]
who created these?
He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might,
and because he is strong in power
not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
"My way is hid from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God"?
28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary,
his understanding is unsearchable.
29 He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
30 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.[11]

THE ROLE OF CYRUS[12]—Isaiah 45:1-13

45:1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,

10. That is, "Look at the stars!"

11. Because Jahweh is the "everlasting God," the "Creator of the ends of the earth," and because "his understanding is unsearchable," therefore Israel may have absolute confidence in Him. Supported by His strength men may rise above all their weaknesses and trials.

12. The prophet sees in the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the hope of liberation for the exiles. See again the introduction to this chapter.

to subdue nations before him
and ungird the loins of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:
2 "I will go before you
and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut asunder the bars of iron,
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness[13]
and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
4 For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.[14]
5 I am the LORD, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;[15]
I gird you, though you do not know me,
6 that men may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
7 I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe,
I am the LORD, who do all these things.

8 "Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth,
and let it cause righteousness to spring up also;
I the LORD have created it.

9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker,
an earthen vessel with the potter!
Does the clay say to him who fashions it, 'what are you making'?
or 'Your work has no handles'?[16]

13. Or, "hidden treasures."
14. Jahweh is using Cyrus to fulfill His purposes even though that king does not yet recognize Him.
15. Verses 5 and 6 give explicit expression to the idea of absolute monotheism. See the introduction to this chapter.
16. Some men may object to the idea that a foreign conqueror should be regarded as God's agent. The prophet contends in this paragraph that such men are hardly qualified to criticize the ways of their "Maker."

10 Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?'
or to a woman, 'With what are you in travail?' "
11 Thus says the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
"Will you question me about my children,
or command me concerning the work of my hands?
12 I made the earth,
and created man upon it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.
13 I have aroused him in righteousness,
and I will make straight all his ways;
he shall build my city
and set my exiles free,
not for price or reward,"
says the LORD of hosts.[17]

SONGS OF THE SERVANT[18]

Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13—53:12

42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him,
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
2 He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
3 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
4 He will not fail or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.[19]

17. The reference in this verse is again to Cyrus. As will be seen later, Cyrus did allow the exiles to return to Jerusalem. He did not, however, rebuild the city of Jerusalem (as the prophet here seems to anticipate).

18. In the four passages which follow there is described the "Servant" of Jahweh, one whose mission it is to serve all men everywhere, offering to them justice and healing and salvation even though in so doing he shall bring upon himself shame and suffering. The identity of the Servant has been the subject of considerable speculation. Some believe that the author had in mind a particular individual, and numerous names have been proposed (Moses, Jeremiah, Josiah, II Isaiah himself, the Messiah, and others). More generally it is believed that the writer was thinking of Israel as a people, not so much the historical Israel as a whole, but rather the *ideal* Israel, the *true* Israel within the larger entity. See Note 22, below.

19. Here the mission of the Servant is first described. Israel is a "chosen" people, not to

49:1 Listen to me, O coastlands,
and hearken, you peoples from afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name.
2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.[20]
3 And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."[21]
4 But I said, "I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the LORD,
and my recompense with my God."

5 And now the LORD says,
who formed me from the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,[22]
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength—
6 he says:
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the preserved of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."[23]

50:4 The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word
him that is weary.

enjoy special privileges, but to serve mankind, even "the nations" of all the earth. The method employed will not be a noisy or sensational one (verse 2), but will be one of gentleness and patient kindliness (verse 3). (In the next two passages it is the Servant himself who speaks.)

20. Like an arrow in a quiver, Israel has been kept for a mission.

21. Some scholars believe that the word "Israel" in this verse did not appear in the original text of (II) *Isaiah*. Even if it is an editorial addition to the text, such an addition indicates that the editors understood the prophet to *mean* Israel as the Servant.

22. Here the Servant seems to be represented, not as *all* of Israel, but as the faithful group within it,—the *true* Israel which seeks to bring all of Israel (as well as other nations) to God.

23. It is not enough for the Servant to be concerned with Israel alone. His mission involves other nations as well.

Morning by morning he wakens,
he wakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.
5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I turned not backward.
6 I gave my back to the smiters,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I hid not my face
from shame and spitting.
7 For the Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been confounded;
therefore I have set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
8 he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who is my adversary?
Let him come near to me.
9 Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.[24]

52:13 Behold, my servant shall prosper,
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
14 As many were astonished at him—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the sons of men—
15 so shall he startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which has not been told them they shall see,
and that which they have not heard they shall understand.[25]

53:1 Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;

24. The Servant endures persecution, but he persists in his mission, confident that with God's help he shall finally prevail and be vindicated.

25. Just as nations and kings have stood in astonishment (and horror) at the Servant's suffering, so (in contrast) shall they come to marvel at his exaltation.

he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.[26]

4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.[27]
7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.
8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
9 And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,[28]
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

26. Because of the Servant's uncomely appearance and his suffering he was "despised and rejected." This suggests (as in verse 4b) that his suffering had been incorrectly interpreted as punishment for sin.

27. In verses 4-6 the cause and purpose of the Servant's suffering is stated by those in whose behalf he has been sent. He has suffered, not because of his own sins, but because of the sins of others. Verse 5 might be translated: "But *he* was pierced for *our* rebellions, *he* was crushed for *our* guilt; *he* bore chastisement that *we* might have peace." The Servant's suffering is thus *vicarious* (voluntarily borne in behalf of others). Such suffering is *redemptive,* serving to redeem or deliver men from their sins and to bring them into right relationship with God. (Do not fail to compare this interpretation of suffering with the view generally held.)

28. "Evil doers" is sometimes read here instead of "a rich man."

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him;
he has put him to grief;
when he makes himself an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand;
11 he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous;
and he shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.[29]

"HO, EVERY ONE WHO THIRSTS . . ."[30]—Isaiah 55

55:1 "Ho, every one who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.[31]
2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in fatness.
3 Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live;
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.[32]

29. Although numerous phrases in this paragraph are not very clear, the underlying thought is unmistakable. Back of the Servant's suffering there has been a divine purpose. And in the end his vicarious suffering will be justified.

As previously stated, the prophet's portrayal of the Servant should probably be interpreted as his ideal for Israel. The "Songs of the Servant" are frequently quoted, however, as descriptive of Jesus, for Christians have seen in him the realization of the ideal which II Isaiah had for his nation, Israel.

30. This final plea is one of the best-loved passages of the Old Testament. It is probably the last of the chapters which we have from II Isaiah.

31. People *everywhere* are invited to partake of true spiritual nourishment (symbolized by "waters," "wine," and "milk").

32. Those who accept the invitation shall experience the "steadfast, sure love" promised to David.

4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
5 Behold, you shall call nations that you know not,
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

6 "Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
7 let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.[33]

10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and return not thither but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
11 so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

12 "For you shall go out in joy,
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."[34]

33. Men may be sure that Jahweh will "abundantly pardon" (verse 7), for He stands far above men in His desire for their redemption.

34. All of nature shall rejoice when Israel returns from exile (verse 12). This evidence of Jahweh's care shall be an "everlasting sign" of the divine mercy and providence.

For a review of the message of II Isaiah read again the introduction to this chapter.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RESTORATION AND THE STORIES OF RUTH AND JONAH

In 539 B.C. Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and thus inaugurated what is called the Persian Period in the world's history. The policy of Cyrus was quite different from that of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. Instead of attempting to destroy all elements of national unity among the conquered peoples he sought to conciliate them. He allowed exiles to return to their native lands. He recognized and even honored their national deities. He is often regarded as one of the most enlightened rulers that the world has known.

This change of policy affected greatly the course of Jewish history. Soon after the fall of Babylon some of the Jewish exiles decided to return to Palestine under the leadership of Zerubbabel and certain others. A number of them arrived at Jerusalem in 538 B.C. In 520 B.C., due especially to the influence of Haggai and Zechariah, prophets whose words are not included in this text, work began on the rebuilding of the Temple. The building was completed and dedicated in 516 B.C. It is commonly designated as the Second Temple.

Although the Temple was thus restored, Jerusalem still lay in ruins, and a general state of wretchedness prevailed. News of these conditions reached a Jew named Nehemiah, who was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes I (king of Persia at the time), and who enjoyed the great favor of that ruler. With the permission of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah came to Jerusalem as governor in the year 444 B.C. His intention was to rebuild the city and restore its walls. This he accomplished in spite of numerous difficulties. After returning to Babylonia he came once more to Jerusalem in 425 B.C., this time strongly emphasizing the importance of the ceremonial aspects of religion and racial purity. The latter he tried to ensure by forbidding all marriages with foreigners.

A little later, about 397 B.C., another Jew named Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylonia (although earlier scholars have been inclined to date his arrival before that of Nehemiah). Like Nehemiah he was much concerned with ritual and ceremony as essential in religion. Ezra, perhaps more than any one else, was responsible for establishing in Judaism what we call *legalism,* that is, reliance upon strict obedience to a written code of laws as the fundamental requirement of religion. Originally, no doubt, it was thought that outward forms and ceremonies were necessary as a means of preserving the more intangible *ethical* aspects of religion, but as Judaism developed ritual and ceremony were emphasized far more than the ethical and the truly spiritual. It was legalism of this sort which Jesus later so strongly condemned.

Like Nehemiah, also, Ezra emphasized the matter of racial purity and the need for avoiding relationships with foreigners. The original thought behind this kind of emphasis was undoubtedly to prevent the Jews from coming under the influence of foreign ideas and practices which might threaten the distinctive elements in Hebrew religion. In any case, Ezra was not content simply to forbid further foreign marriages: he demanded that all foreign wives be divorced. Thus we see developing the *exclusiveness* or *particularism* of Judaism.

Information concerning Nehemiah and Ezra is derived from the work of the "Chronicler," writing about 250 B.C. It was he who composed the Old Testament books of *I* and *II Chronicles, Ezra,* and *Nehemiah,* drawing in part upon certain "memoirs" of Nehemiah and Ezra.

It should be noted that the religious ideas and attitudes ascribed to Nehemiah and Ezra were not without their historical antecedents. About 500 B.C. there was written the Priestly document (see the introduction to Chapter I), which aimed at the establishment of a kind of theocratic state in which the Jews, under God, could take up their new life after the Exile in spite of the fact of foreign domination. Israel was conceived as a holy congregation; its life was to be conducted according to an extended system of laws supposed to have been given through Moses. The religious life consisted of unquestioning obedience to these laws. The history of the Hebrew people was rewritten in such a way as to show that the laws were rooted in the historical events as God dealt with His Chosen People from the time of Creation to the time of Moses. In the keeping of these laws Israel was to be a holy nation, separated from the other peoples of the world. At about the time of Nehemiah and Ezra (i.e., c. 400 B.C.) the Priestly document was combined with material which had been written earlier to form the present Pentateuch. It is not surprising, therefore, that with these two men one finds the emergence of the kind of legalism which has just been discussed.

It was in the midst of these developments that the stories of *Ruth* and *Jonah* were written. Both are protests against the sort of exclusiveness and narrow nationalism associated with the emphases of Nehemiah and Ezra. These protests, and the truths which the writers wished to convey, are expressed in the form of stories (just as Jesus used parables to illustrate his teachings).

The book of *Ruth* is one of the most beautiful stories in all literature. The heroine, Ruth, is represented as a Moabite woman (and hence a foreigner), who demonstrates an abiding loyalty to the family of her Jewish husband. Furthermore, she is the great-grandmother of David. In presenting a picture of a foreigner's loyalty, and in portraying David, Israel's greatest hero, as the descendant of a foreigner, the author is raising his voice against the attitude of the religious leaders of his day.

The book of *Jonah* is a story which the writer places in the period of Assyrian supremacy. It deals with the attitude of the leading figure, Jonah, towards the foreign city of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Jonah's bitter disappointment when Jahweh fails to destroy Nineveh seems to be intended to represent the narrowness and exclusiveness of some of the Jews at the time when the book was written. Jahweh's rebuke of Jonah's attitude constitutes the author's denunciation of that narrowness and exclusiveness. The writer, like II Isaiah, recognizes the logical implications of absolute monotheism: if Jahweh is God of all the world, then His love and mercy must also be universal, including all men everywhere. It is to be regretted that many persons, concerned only with the question of the historicity of the story, have failed to recognize the import of the book's message. (Similarly it would be regrettable simply to argue about the historicity of some of Jesus' parables.) Actually the teaching of God's far-reaching mercy in the story of Jonah is as lofty as that to be found anywhere in the entire Old Testament.

RUTH

1:1 In the days when the judges ruled[1] there was a famine in the land, and
a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of
2 Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elime-
lech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were
Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.
3 They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech,
4 the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These

1. Since the story of Ruth deals with the time of the Judges (although written much later) the editors of the Old Testament placed it immediately after the book of *Judges*.

took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the
5 other Ruth. They lived there about ten years; and both Mahlon and
Chilion died, so that the woman was bereft of her two sons and her
husband.
6 Then she started with her daughters-in-law to return from the country
of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had
7 visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place
where she was, with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way
8 to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-
law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal
9 kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD
grant that you may find a home, each of you in the house of her hus-
band!"[2] Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.
10 And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."
11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me?
12 Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn
back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If
I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and
13 should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would
you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceed-
ingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone forth
14 against me."[3] Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah
kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
15 And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and
16 to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Entreat me
not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will
go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and
17 your God my God; where you die I will die, and there will I be buried.
18 May the LORD do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you."
And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no
more.
19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when
they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them;
20 and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" She said to them, "Do not call me
Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.[4]

2. That is, in the family of her deceased husband.

3. Naomi's words in verses 11-13 suggest the Hebrew custom of the so-called Levirate marriage. This (according to *Deuteronomy* 25:5-10) provided that when a man died childless his brother (or nearest kinsman if there were no brother) should marry the widow; the first son born of this union would be regarded as that of the deceased husband. Naomi means here that since there neither are nor shall be any brothers to carry out the custom for Ruth and Orpah, their best chances for future marriage are to be found in their native land (Moab).

4. "Naomi" means "Pleasant"; "Mara" means "Bitter."

21 I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me
Naomi, when the LORD has afflicted me and the Almighty has brought
calamity upon me?"
22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with
her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethle-
hem at the beginning of barley harvest.

2:1 Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a man of wealth, of the
2 family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said
to Naomi, "Let me go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain
after him in whose sight I shall find favor."[5] And she said to her, "Go, my
3 daughter." So she set forth and went and gleaned in the field after the
reapers; and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to
4 Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from
Bethlehem; and he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And
5 they answered, "The LORD bless you." Then Boaz said to his servant who
6 was in charge of the reapers, "Whose maiden is this?" And the servant
who was in charge of the reapers answered, "It is the Moabite maiden,
7 who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, 'Pray,
let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she
came, and she has continued from early morning until now, without
resting even for a moment."
8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean
9 in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my maidens. Let your
eyes be upon the field which they are reaping, and go after them. Have I
not charged the young men not to molest you? And when you are thirsty,
10 go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." Then she
fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I
found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am
11 a foreigner?" But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your
mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me,
and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came
12 to a people that you did not know before. The LORD recompense you for
what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God
13 of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" Then she
said, "You are most gracious to me, my lord, for you have comforted me
and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not one of your
maidservants."
14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, and eat some bread,
and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he

5. Provision was made that those who were in need might "glean" for themselves what had been left in a harvested field: "When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow" (*Deuteronomy* 24:19).

passed to her parched grain; and she ate until she was satisfied, and she
15 had some left over. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young
men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach
16 her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for
her to glean, and do not rebuke her."
17 So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she
18 had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and
went into the city; she showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned,
and she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after
19 being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean
today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice
of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and
20 said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." And Naomi
said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he by the LORD, whose kindness
has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The
21 man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin." And Ruth the Moabitess
said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my servants, till they
22 have finished all my harvest.' " And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-
in-law, "It is well, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, lest in
23 another field you be molested." So she kept close to the maidens of Boaz,
gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived
with her mother-in-law.

3:1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I
2 not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you? Now is not Boaz
our kinsman, with whose maidens you were? See, he is winnowing barley
3 tonight at the threshing floor.[6] Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and
put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not
make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drink-
4 ing. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and
5 uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." And she
replied, "All that you say I will do."
6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-
7 law had told her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was
merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came
8 softly, and uncovered his feet, and lay down. At midnight the man was
9 startled, and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! He said,
"Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant; spread
10 your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin."[7] And he said,

6. The evening breezes were utilized to blow away the chaff in winnowing.

7. As "next of kin" (although not a brother of Ruth's deceased husband) Boaz might be expected to assume the obligation of marrying Ruth in accordance with the custom of Levirate marriage. See Note 3.

"May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; you have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young
11 men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you
12 are a woman of worth. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman, yet
13 there is a kinsman nearer than I. Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the LORD lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning."[8]

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman
15 came to the threshing floor." And he said, "Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and laid it upon her; then she went into the city.
16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare,
17 my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'You must
18 not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.' " She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

4:1 And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the next of kin, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn
2 aside, friend; sit down here"; and he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here"; so they
3 sat down. Then he said to the next of kin, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land which belonged
4 to our kinsman Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it, and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it,
5 and I come after you."[9] And he said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you are also buying Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name
6 of the dead to his inheritance." Then the next of kin said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeem-

8. If the *nearest* of kin failed to assume the rights and duties involved in the Levirate marriage, the *next* of kin acquired the obligation.

9. Along with the right and duty of the nearest kinsman to marry the widow there was also the right to have the opportunity of buying the deceased relative's property before it was publicly offered for sale.

ing and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.[10]

8 So when the next of kin said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off
9 his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon.
10 Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the
11 gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day." Then all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in
12 Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem; and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the children that the LORD will give you by this young woman."

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and
14 the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without
15 next of kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law
16 who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse.
17 And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, the father of David.[11]

18 Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron,
19,20 Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, Amminadab of Nahshon, Nah-
21,22 shon of Salmon, Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.[12]

10. According to *Deuteronomy* 25:9 the nearest kinsman who refused to assume his obligation in such cases was required to take off his shoe as a sign of his refusal; he was also made the object of public scorn. Here, however, the act does not seem to involve any particular public disapproval. This verse may be an addition to the original text.

11. The original story of *Ruth* may have ended at this point.

12. Various scholars have suggested that the purpose of the author of this story was (1) to urge the enforcement of the Levirate marriage, or (2) to give additional information concerning David's ancestors, or (3) simply to relate an interesting tale. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, however, the more general view is that the book constitutes a protest against Jewish exclusiveness and against the rising hostility towards foreigners; the writer is attempting to show that foreigners are capable of perfect loyalty and that Israel's greatest king was himself the descendent of a foreign wife. (Some writers, in this connection, regard the story as an allegory, in which Naomi represents the returning exiles, Boaz the natives, and Ruth the foreigners.)

1:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,
2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wicked-
3 ness has come up before me."[13] But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.[14] He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.
4 But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty
5 tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god; and they threw the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down, and was
6 fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we do not perish."
7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the
8 lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said to him, "Tell us, on whose account this evil has come upon us? What is your occupation? And whence do you
9 come? What is your country? And of what people are you?" And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who
10 made the sea and the dry land." Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.
11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may
12 quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. He said to them, "Take me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great tempest
13 has come upon you." Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempes-
14 tuous against them. Therefore they cried to the LORD, "We beseech thee, O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent
15 blood; for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee." So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging.
16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

13. Jonah is thus represented as living during the period of Assyrian supremacy. The name is derived from *II Kings* 14:25, where "Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet" is mentioned. Nineveh was the Assyrian capital.

14. Jonah, not wishing to accept the divine commission to go to Nineveh, decides to flee (in the opposite direction) to Tarshish, a place in Spain.

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish. . . .[15]

10 And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

3:1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,
2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that
3 I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days'
4 journey in breadth.[16] Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be over-
5 thrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.
6 Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in
7 ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd
8 nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in
9 his hands. Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?"
10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.[17]

4:1,2 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "I pray thee, LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and
3 abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil. Therefore now, O LORD, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die
4,5 than to live."[18] And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a

15. The omitted verses contain a poem which probably did not appear in the original story. This first part of the narrative seems to be intended to suggest the universal extent of God's presence and power. In the following part a further implication is drawn: if Jahweh is God of all the earth then His concern and mercy is for *all* men.

16. It is clearly an exaggeration to say that three days were required to walk across the city.

17. Historically, of course, Assyria at no time turned to Israel's God. The writer's purpose, obviously, is to tell a story to illustrate a religious truth, not to report historical events.

18. Jonah here indicates that he did not want Israel's enemies to be spared; he had not wished to warn them for fear they *would* repent and be saved. Because his threat of punishment had not been fulfilled he is angry and wishes to die.

booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

6 And the LORD God appointed a plant, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from discom-
7 fort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant,
8 so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to
9 live." But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?"[19] And he said, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die."
10 And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished
11 in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"[20]

19. In the thought of the story-teller Jonah is angry, not so much because he has been deprived of the plant's shade, but rather because he feels it to be wrong for the plant to be destroyed.

20. Jonah has great sympathy ("pity") for the plant, but he has been perfectly willing, and even eager, to see the whole city of human beings destroyed. The story ends abruptly, but the concluding question brings to the reader the writer's message: God cares for *all* men everywhere. Just as the divine power is universal (Jonah could not escape from it), so also is the divine love and mercy.

In the attitude of Jonah the author portrays the narrowness of contemporary Jewish thought. As seen in the introduction to this chapter, that narrowness was intensified after the Exile (perhaps the swallowing of Jonah by the fish is intended to suggest the Exile). In Jahweh's rebuke of Jonah the writer rebukes Israel. He proclaims the logical implication of Israel's monotheism: Jahweh is God of all the earth; therefore He cares for all nations. It is Israel's mission (compare II Isaiah) to bring all peoples unto Him.

CHAPTER XVIII

WISDOM LITERATURE

The material thus far studied has shown us that among the Hebrews there were two groups of persons whose religious interests and emphases were different in several respects. On the one hand there were the priests, who were concerned chiefly with forms of worship and the control of organized religion. On the other hand there were the prophets, who interpreted religion primarily in terms of ethical conduct in all social relationships and (especially Jeremiah) in terms of a personal relationship to God which would insure such ethical conduct. In addition to these groups there was also a third, that of the so-called "wise men," whose aim was to impart such information and "wisdom" that men would be enabled to live successful and efficient lives. Their recorded teachings constitute what we call *Wisdom Literature*. (Many other nations also had their wise men and sages. It is interesting to observe, in this connection, that an Egyptian writing, *The Wisdom of Amen-em-ope,* includes almost all of *Proverbs* 22:17 - 23:14. Greek and other influences are also to be seen in Hebrew Wisdom Literature.)

Wisdom, in this type of teaching and writing, involved not only knowledge, but also the matter of ethical or moral conduct. To be wise was to acquire knowledge and to lead decent, peaceful, and (sometimes) helpful lives. The motive for such conduct, however, was not always the same. Some of the wise men seemed to think in purely secular terms. For them the aim of existence was to be happy, to be prosperous, and to enjoy long life. Their outlook was almost entirely utilitarian. Other wise men, on the other hand, thought of wisdom as having a definitely religious basis. For them the goal of life was to live in harmony with the will of God and to secure His approval. Their point of view is best expressed in these words:

> "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
> and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." (*Proverbs* 9:10)

But though the sages differed in their motives and purposes, they agreed in regarding wisdom as the means to the end. And although much of their moral teaching lacked a religious foundation, they undoubtedly exerted an important influence upon Hebrew standards of life and conduct.

In their teachings the wise men made extensive use of "proverbs,"—concise, easily-remembered sayings. At first these proverbs took the form of comparisons (in Hebrew the word means "comparison"), such as,

> "Like clouds and wind without rain
> is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give." (*Proverbs* 25:14)

This form is not always found, however. Nor is Wisdom Literature confined to proverbs, as will be seen in the following pages.

The book of *Proverbs* provides our best example of this type of writing in the Old Testament. Like the book of *Psalms,* it is a collection of selections from various sources (and from still earlier collections). It has been ascribed to Solomon (just as the *Psalms* have been attributed to David) because of that king's reputed wisdom, but the contents of the book indicate that we have here the work of many men. The idea of the universality of God, the emphasis upon the individual rather than upon the nation, the language, and

other considerations all suggest that the present book of *Proverbs* was composed some time after the Exile.

The books of *Job* and *Ecclesiastes* (both in the Old Testament) may also be classified as Wisdom Literature, although they are quite different from *Proverbs* in many respects. In the Apocrypha *Ecclesiasticus* and *The Wisdom of Solomon* represent this type of teaching.

As the following passages are read there should be observed the use of parallelism, similar to that which has been seen in connection with the prophets (see especially the introduction to Chapter XI).

THE PURPOSE IN TEACHING WISDOM[1]—Proverbs 1:2-6

1:2 That men may know wisdom and instruction,
understand words of insight,
3 receive instruction in wise dealing,
righteousness, justice, and equity;
4 that prudence may be given to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth—
5 the wise man also may hear and increase in learning,
and the man of understanding acquire skill,
6 to understand a proverb and a figure,[2]
the words of the wise and their riddles.

WISDOM AS A GUIDE OF LIFE[3]—Proverbs 3:13-35

3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
and the man who gets understanding,
14 for the gain from it is better than gain from silver
and its profit better than gold.
15 She is more precious than jewels,[4]
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
16 Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.[5]
17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called happy.

1. The author of the first part of *Proverbs* summarizes, at the very beginning, the aim of the study of Wisdom.

2. Or, "an interpretation."

3. On the whole the material in this section deals with Wisdom in general (although a few typical proverbs are woven into it). Emphasis is placed upon the value of Wisdom as a guide of life and also upon the rewards which come to him who seeks after Wisdom and finds it.

4. Observe that here and in the following verses Wisdom is personified as a woman (because in Hebrew the word for "wisdom" is feminine). This is characteristic of Wisdom Literature.

5. This verse represents the rather typical (and questionable?) view that the most wise are always the most prosperous. (This may be compared with the idea that the most righteous are always the most prosperous.)

19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;
20 by his knowledge the deeps broke forth,
and the clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion;
let them not escape from your sight,
22 and they will be life for your soul
and adornment for your neck.
23 Then you will walk on your way securely
and your foot will not stumble.
24 If you sit down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
25 Do not be afraid of sudden panic,
or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes;
26 for the LORD will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from being caught.
27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to do it.

28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again,
tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you.
29 Do not plan evil against your neighbor
who dwells trustingly beside you.
30 Do not contend with a man for no reason,
when he has done you no harm.
31 Do not envy a man of violence
and do not choose any of his ways;
32 for the perverse man is an abomination to the LORD,
but the upright are in his confidence.
33 The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the abode of the righteous.
34 Toward the scorners he is scornful,
but to the humble he shows favor.
35 The wise will inherit honor,
but fools get disgrace.

WISDOM'S CALL[6]—Proverbs 8

8:1 Does not wisdom call,
does not understanding raise her voice?

6. This is one of the best-known chapters dealing with Wisdom. Again we see Wisdom personified, and in the larger part of the chapter (verses 4-36) Wisdom herself is represented as speaking and commending herself to all men.

2 On the heights beside the way,
in the paths she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:
4 "To you, O men, I call,
and my cry is to the sons of men.
5 O simple ones, learn prudence;
O foolish men, pay attention.
6 Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;
7 for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
9 They are all straight to him who understands
and right to those who find knowledge.
10 Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;
11 for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.[7]
12 I, wisdom, dwell in prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.[8]
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
14 I have counsel and sound wisdom,
I have insight, I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
16 by me princes rule,
and nobles govern the earth.
17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.
18 Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,

7. Although the writer seems to believe that the attainment of wisdom insures prosperity (see verses 18 and 21, below), he also holds the more important view that relatively wisdom is of far greater value than material things (verses 10, 11, and 19).

8. This line was probably inserted by a later scribe, for it destroys the regular parallelism. Such insertions are not uncommon.

21 endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

22 The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of old.[9]
23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 before he had made the earth with its fields,
or the first of the dust of the world.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 then I was beside him, like a master workman;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the sons of men.

32 And now, my sons, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.
34 Happy is the man who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.
35 For he who finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the LORD;
36 but he who misses me injures himself;
all who hate me love death."

9. Verses 22-31 describe Wisdom as eternal, the first and greatest of God's creations. The writer implies that because of Wisdom's timeless significance the teachings of the wise men should be studied diligently.

THE IDEAL WIFE[10]—Proverbs 31:10-31

31:10 A good wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
14 She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from afar.
15 She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her maidens.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds her loins with strength
and makes her arms strong.
18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
19 She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
20 She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
22 She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is known in the gates,
when he sits among the elders of the land.[11]
24 She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers girdles to the merchant.
25 Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.[12]

10. This is one of the well-known passages in *Proverbs*. It provides an interesting insight into the activities and responsibilities of the Hebrew wife. The emphasis is upon those qualities which contributed to a contented and peaceful family life. In the Hebrew this poem appears as an acrostic alphabetic composition: each of the twenty-two verses begins with the corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

11. This verse seems to mean, according to the context, that the husband is distinguished by his clothing, which his wife has fashioned.

12. That is, her household is so well established that she has no anxiety about the future.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
27 She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
29 "Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all."
30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.[13]
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates.

SELECTED PROVERBS CONCERNING VARIOUS SUBJECTS[14]

Proverbs 10:1,12; 12:15; 14:34; 15:1,17; 16:18; 17:1,17;
20:17; 21:2,3,13,23; 22:6; 28:23

10:1 A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

12 Hatred stirs up strife,
but love covers all offenses.

12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.

14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.

15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
than a fatted ox and hatred with it.

16:18 Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.

13. The original reading of this line was probably "but an intelligent woman is to be praised" (following the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament). A later scribe made the change in order to insert a religious element into the Hebrew text.

14. The following are some of the more striking and some of the most frequently-quoted Proverbs. Although only a few are given here, they serve to indicate the wide range of subject matter dealt with in this type of teaching and writing.

17:1 Better is a dry morsel with quiet
than a house full of feasting with strife.

17 A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity.

20:17 Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man,
but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.

21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
but the LORD weighs the heart.[15]

3 To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

13 He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor
will himself cry out and not be heard.

23 He who keeps his mouth and his tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.

22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it.

28:23 He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor
than he who flatters with his tongue.

15. Here, and in the following verse, we see the influence of the prophetic emphasis.

CHAPTER XIX

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

During the post-exilic years there developed among the Jews a form of writing, called Apocalyptic Literature, which is to be distinguished from other forms thus far studied. In it one finds a distinctive kind of thought as well as distinctive literary characteristics.

In order to understand this material it is necessary to know something of the historical situation which produced it. The Jews continued to live under Persian domination until the time of the Greek emperor known as Alexander the Great, who, during the years 334-331 B.C., gained control of the entire area from Asia Minor to Egypt and inaugurated what is called the Greek Period. Alexander not only ruled politically but also attempted, quite successfully, to introduce in the conquered areas many elements of Greek (or Hellenistic) culture and civilization. One evidence of this Hellenization is seen in the fact that during this period there was begun in Egypt the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek language,—a translation which is known as the *Septuagint*. Upon the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. his empire was divided. The two emerging kingdoms which affected Palestine directly were those of the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria. The Jews came under the domination of first one and then the other. A particular crisis was reached at the time of the Seleucid ruler of Syria named Antiochus IV, popularly known as Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.). This ruler aroused the hostility of the Jews in various ways, assuming the right, for example, to designate the Jewish "high priest." When confronted with opposition he attempted to suppress Judaism entirely, forbidding the observance of the Sabbath, the practice of circumcision, and the possession of the Hebrew scriptures. The climax was reached when he placed at the Temple in Jerusalem (in 168 B.C.) an altar to the Olympian Zeus, called "the abomination that makes desolate" in the book of *Daniel* (11:31). Open revolt broke out when a certain Mattathias refused to offer a sacrifice on a heathen altar and slew the Syrian official who had made the demand. In the war which followed, the Jews were led, in turn, by three of the sons of Mattathias,—Judas, Jonathan, and Simon. These are known as the Maccabeans. Under their leadership religious freedom was regained and eventually political independence was won. The kingdom which they established continued until Palestine came under Roman rule in the time of Pompey (63 B.C.).

Although Jewish independence was thus finally (though only temporarily) gained, the fact remains that for centuries the Hebrews had been forced to live under the domination of foreign empires. And this fact had an exceedingly important bearing upon religious thought. Many Jews, it is true, had sought to preserve religion by centering attention upon conformity to religious laws and ceremonies (*legalism*—see the introduction to Chapter XVII), remaining relatively aloof from the political considerations. For some, however, this emphasis did not suffice. For them the distressing state into which the Jews had fallen seemed to indicate either that God's purposes for His chosen people had been defeated, *or else they would be fulfilled at some time in the future*. Those whom we call the "apocalyptists" accepted the latter alternative and looked forward with eager anticipation to the time when God would intervene directly and catastrophically, bringing to an end the present (evil) world order and establishing the new Kingdom of God. The hopes and convictions of these men are presented in what is known as Apocalyptic Literature.

The word "apocalypse" means literally an unveiling, a disclosing, or a revealing; an apocalypse is therefore a revelation. Apocalyptic Literature is consequently that kind of writing in which there is revealed God's plan for the establishing of the new world order.

In general there are to be found in Apocalyptic Literature the following features: (1) A distinctive *eschatology*. The word "eschatology" means a "doctrine of the last things." It pertains to the "end" of the present state of affairs and the inauguration of the final period when God will bring to full realization His plans and purposes. This, according to the apocalyptists, will be accomplished, not by human effort (not even by human beings empowered by God), but by supernatural, divine action. The literature describes this action in various ways. In some cases great calamities are expected to be sent by God to destroy the evil,—calamities such as famine, pestilence, and war. In other cases there is mention of fire, earthquake, the darkening of the sun and the moon. All of this expresses deep despair with regard to men and their possible accomplishments; existing world conditions seemed to be of such an evil nature that only God, by direct intervention, could effect a change. (This stands in considerable contrast to some forms of the earlier prophetic eschatology. Isaiah, for example, had anticipated a new kingdom to be established by a Davidic messiah. Such a human agency seemed to the apocalyptists to be inadequate.) If there was to be hope it must be a hope rooted in a confidence that God Himself will act. (2) *Pseudonymity*. In apocalyptic documents the actual writers do not represent the revelations which they offer as having come to *themselves* from God. Rather, they write in the name of some individual who lived in the past—usually in the distant past—to whom the revelation is supposed to have come. One important reason for this procedure involves certain attitudes which came to be taken with regard to scripture. About 400 B.C. the Pentateuch came to be accepted as the authoritative revelation of God's will through Moses. About 200 B.C. the writings of the prophets became also a part of this authoritative scripture. There arose, consequently, the idea that here, in this body of material, the full and perfect will of God had been made known to man. This, in turn, was followed by the notion that the period of God's revelatory activity had come to an end (further direct revelation was no longer necessary since the *full* revelation had already been given). If a newly-written document, therefore, was to carry weight and be accepted as authoritative in its disclosure of the divine will and purpose, the revelation which it offered must be represented as having been given to an individual who lived in the period (before 200 B.C.) when God was still active in providing such revelation. (It is also possible, perhaps, that documents containing denunciations of contemporary rulers would be thought less likely to be suppressed if they appeared to come from past ages.) (3) *Prediction*. Since the hopes of the apocalyptists were hopes for the future, the expectations, of necessity, were expressed in terms of predictions,—eschatological predictions. But a second kind of prediction (a *seeming* prediction) is also to be found. Since the revelations are presented as revelations of men who lived in the past, those revelations could involve predictions of events occurring between the time of the supposed recipients of them and the time of the actual writers. Such seeming predictions could be quite accurate, since the actual writers could know of events which had occurred in the intervening period. Furthermore, readers might be expected to have confidence in the *eschatological* predictions since the (pretended) givers of the revelations were seen to be accurate in the second type of predictions. (4) *Visions* and *dreams*. Since the apocalyptists were presenting accounts of what God would do in the future, and since only God Himself could disclose such a knowledge, it is clear that some *means* of disclosure must be found. Visions and dreams served well as a means by which the divine revelations could be said to come to men. (5) *Symbolism* or *imagery*. Symbols are used extensively in the apocalyptic material. Individuals and empires, for example, are symbolized as beasts or as objects of various sorts. Even certain numbers came to have a symbolic significance.

While some of the characteristics just discussed are to be found in other parts of the Old Testament (*Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, Malachi,* for example), the book of *Daniel* represents this type of writing and thinking in its most developed form. This document was written between 168 and 165 B.C., at the time when Antiochus Epiphanes was carrying out his attack upon Judaism. The author's purpose was to encourage and strengthen the Jews in their resistance. A basis for encouragement is provided by a man named Daniel, who, with three friends (given the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), is pictured as an exile carried into Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar some four hundred years earlier. (There is much diversity of opinion regarding the actual historicity of Daniel.) A

part of the book is intended to suggest that just as God, in the past, saved Daniel and his friends and rewarded them for their loyalty to their religion (in one account Daniel remains unharmed in a den of lions, for example; in another the three friends are delivered from a "fiery furnace"), so also God will deliver those who remain loyal in their resistance to Antiochus Epiphanes and his demands. In the apocalyptic sections of the book the writer describes revelations which came to this Daniel, revelations "predicting" certain events occurring between the time of Daniel and the time of the actual author, and promising that God will destroy all earthly (evil) kingdoms and establish in the immediate future the final Kingdom of God. The Jews are to find courage and strength as they anticipate this imminent divine intervention, for if they remain true they will be allowed to share in the blessings of the new age.

Among the numerous apocalyptic writings which were not given a place in the Old Testament canon of scripture the book of *Enoch* is one of the most important. It describes certain revelations supposedly given to the Enoch who, in *Genesis* 5:24, is said to have "walked with God" in the earlier days of the world's existence. This book contains material written in different periods (some parts were composed at about the time when *Daniel* was written; some parts were composed later) and introduces various new ideas. The excerpts included here show that there is introduced again the idea of a messianic figure. It is a figure, however, quite different from the Messiah ("son"—descendant—of David) as anticipated by the earlier prophets. According to this material the new age is to be inaugurated by supernatural rather than by human means, as in apocalyptic literature generally, but not (as in *Daniel*) directly by God Himself. God's agent here is a supernatural being called "the Son of Man." A grasp of the distinctive meaning involved in the *Enoch* usage of the phrase is exceedingly important for an understanding of some of the New Testament references to Jesus as "Son of man."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM—Daniel 2

2:1 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar,[1] Nebuchadnezzar
2 had dreams; and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. Then the
king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and
the Chaldeans be summoned, to tell the king his dreams.[2] So they came
3 and stood before the king. And the king said to them, "I had a dream,
4 and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." Then the Chaldeans said
to the king, "O king, live for ever! Tell your servants the dream, and we
5 will show the interpretation." The king answered the Chaldeans, "The
word from me is sure: if you do not make known to me the dream and its
interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall
6 be laid in ruins. But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you
shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore
7 show me the dream and its interpretation." They answered a second
time, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its
8 interpretation." The king answered, "I know with certainty that you are
9 trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is sure that
if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence
for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me

1. In this scene Daniel is placed in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king who destroyed Jerusalem.

2. The king had been disturbed by the dream, but he could not remember what it was.

till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that
10 you can show me its interpretation." The Chaldeans answered the king,
"There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand; for no
great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or en-
11 chanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and none
can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."
12 Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded
13 that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went forth
that the wise men were to be slain, and they sought Daniel and his com-
14 panions, to slay them. Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion
to Ari-och, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to slay the
15 wise men of Babylon; he said to Ari-och, the king's captain, "Why is the
decree of the king so severe?" Then Ari-och made the matter known to
16 Daniel. And Daniel went in and besought the king to appoint him a time,
that he might show to the king the interpretation.
17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Han-
18 aniah, Misha-el, and Azariah, his companions,[3] and told them to seek
mercy of the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and
his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.
19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then
20 Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel said:

"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever,
to whom belong wisdom and might.
21 He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding;
22 he reveals deep and mysterious things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.
23 To thee, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise,
for thou hast given me wisdom and strength,
and hast now made known to me what we asked of thee,
for thou hast made known to us the king's matter."

24 Therefore Daniel went in to Ari-och, whom the king had appointed
to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and said thus to him, "Do
not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and
I will show the king the interpretation."

3. These are the men who had been given the new names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They are the three friends of Daniel.

25 Then Ari-och brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said
thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who can
26 make known to the king the interpretation." The king said to Daniel,
whose name was Belteshazzar,[4] "Are you able to make known to me the
27 dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" Daniel answered the
king, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the
28 king the mystery which the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven
who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar
what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head
29 as you lay in bed are these: To you, O king, as you lay in bed came
thoughts of what would be hereafter, and he who reveals mysteries made
30 known to you what is to be. But as for me, not because of any wisdom that
I have more than all the living has this mystery been revealed to me, but
in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and
that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

31 "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and
of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was fright-
32 ening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of
33 silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of
34 iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human
hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them
35 in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all
together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer
threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of
them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great
mountain and filled the whole earth.[5]

36 "This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation.
37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given
38 the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose
hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, the beasts of the
field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all—you are
39 the head of gold. After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you,
and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

4. Daniel was given this name when his friends had been re-named.

5. Verses 31-35 describe the dream of the king. The following verses give the meaning. The various parts of the image symbolize kingdoms. The head of gold is the Babylonian empire (represented by Nebuchadnezzar—see the end of verse 38), the breast and arms of silver the Median empire, the belly and thighs of bronze the Persian empire, the legs of iron the empire of Alexander the Great, and the feet of mixed iron and clay the rival kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. The stone which destroys the image is the final kingdom to be established by God. It is significant that the stone "was cut out by no human hand" (verse 34). This means that the coming kingdom is to be established by *divine, supernatural* intervention (see the introduction to this chapter regarding the distinctive eschatology of apocalyptic writings). God Himself will "set up" the kingdom (see verse 44); it will "stand for ever."

40 And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks
to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall
41 break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes partly of
potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some
of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with
42 miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so
43 the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the
iron mixed with miry clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage,
44 but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And
in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which
shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another
people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an
45 end, and it shall stand for ever; just as you saw that a stone was cut from
a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the
bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to
the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpre-
tation sure."
46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and did homage to
Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to
47 him.[6] The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and
Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to
48 reveal this mystery."[7] Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many
great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and
49 chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel made request of
the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the
affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel remained at the king's
court.

THE "ANCIENT OF DAYS" AND THE "SON OF MAN"

Daniel 7:9-14,18,27

7:9 "As I looked,[8]
thrones were placed
and one that was ancient of days took his seat;[9]

6. The following verse suggests that the "offering and incense" were presented to God rather than to Daniel.

7. The idea that the Babylonian king thus acclaimed the God of the Jews has, of course, no basis in fact.

8. Daniel is here represented as continuing his description of another vision. In it he saw the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek empires symbolized as beasts. The Seleucid kings are seen as "horns" issuing from the fourth beast (the empire of Alexander the Great). One of these horns, "a little one," symbolizes Antiochus Epiphanes.

9. The "Ancient of Days" (compare verse 13) is God Himself, enthroned upon a fiery chariot.

his raiment was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
its wheels were burning fire.
10 A stream of fire issued
and came forth from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.[10]

11 I looked then because of the sound of the great words which the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed
12 and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season
13 and a time.[11] I saw in the night visions,

and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,[12]
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
14 And to him was given dominion
and glory and kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.[13]

18 " 'But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever.'

10. God now appears at the "last judgment." The idea of divine books is an ancient one; they were conceived as including the records of men's evil and righteous deeds.

11. Thus, in the vision, there is seen, in anticipation, the imminent destruction of Antiochus Epiphanes and the kingdom which he rules. (The meaning of the last clause in verse 12 is not clear.)

12. Just as each of the previous kingdoms has been represented as a beast, so also those who will constitute the new Kingdom of God are personified as a man (a "son of man"—see Note 10 in Chapter XV). Sometimes it has been assumed that here "son of man" refers to a messianic figure (an expected Messiah). While such a reference is intended in the book of *Enoch* it is not so in *Daniel*. Here "son of man" is the personification of the "saints of the Most High,"—those who remain loyal to their religion in the present conflict. These are to *receive* the Kingdom (compare verse 14a with verses 18 and 27, below). It is God Himself (see *Daniel* 2:44, above, and also Note 5), not a Messiah sent by God (as in *Enoch*), who inaugurates the new age.

13. In the following two verses Daniel is quoting from the "interpretation" of this vision

27 " 'And the kingdom and the dominion
and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven
shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;
their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,
and all dominions shall serve and obey them.' "

A NEW HOPE[14]—Daniel 12:1-4

12:1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of
your people.[15] And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has
been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people
shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the
2 book.[16] And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.[17]
3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament;
and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and
4 ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words,[18] and seal the book, until the

as that interpretation is given to him by "one of those who stood there." The "one like a son of man" thus seems to be interpreted to mean the "saints of the Most High."

14. These are the concluding words spoken to Daniel by an angel at the time of his last vision.

15. "At that time" is a reference to the time when Antiochus Epiphanes shall be cast down. Michael is the champion or patron angel of Israel.

16. That is, the book which includes the names of those destined for deliverance. Compare Note 10.

17. Here is expressed the new hope, the expectation of the resurrection of the dead. As far as is known this is the earliest statement of the idea. Earlier there had been the thought of the resurrection or restoration of the Hebrew *nation,* but that is quite different from the idea that individuals who have died shall be given new life (see *Ezekiel* 37:1-14 and the accompanying notes in Chapter XV). This new belief is the result, at least in part, of the conviction that the divine justice will ultimately triumph; justice will prevail after death if not before death. This explains why only *some* ("many") who "sleep" (have died) shall "awake." The writer seems to mean that there will be raised those who have not, in this life, received the just rewards or punishments for their righteousness or for their sins; the rest have already received justice.

Later Jewish literature stresses increasingly the idea of resurrection, though there is considerable variation in thought as to *who* shall be raised. In the Old Testament the only other clear reference to resurrection ("Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise") is found in *Isaiah* 26:19. This reference appears in an apocalyptic section of the book of *Isaiah* (chapters 24-27) thought to have been written in the same century in which the book of *Daniel* was composed.

The "wise," at the beginning of verse 3, are those who recognize the truth of their religion and remain loyal to it.

18. In saying that the words of Daniel's revelation are to be "shut up" and "sealed," the writer is attempting to offer to the readers an explanation as to why they were not made known until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes,—the time of the actual writing of the book.

time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."[19]

THE "HEAD OF DAYS" AND THE "SON OF MAN"

Enoch 46:1-6; 48:1-6

46:1 And there I saw One who had a head of days,[20]
And His head was white like wool,
And with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man,
And his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels.
2 And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he
3 was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me:
This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness,
With whom dwelleth righteousness,
And who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden,
Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him,[21]
And whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever.
4 And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen
Shall raise up the kings and the mighty from their seats,
And the strong from their thrones,
And shall loosen the reins of the strong,
And break the teeth of the sinners.
5 And he shall put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms
Because they do not extol and praise Him,

19. The meaning of this sentence is not entirely clear.

20. Enoch is here represented as speaking (see the last paragraph in the introduction to this chapter). God, as the "head of days," is the Everlasting One. Compare the language of verse 1 with that of *Daniel* 7:9 and 7:13.

21. The Lord of Spirits is, of course, God. What is especially important in these words is the reference to the "Son of Man." The writer of this part of *Enoch* clearly conceives of a being sent by God to bring an end to the present evil world order and to establish the new and final age in which the divine purpose will be fully realized. This being is called the Son of Man. The use of this expression seems to have been suggested by the usage in *Daniel* (where there is a *connection* between "son of man" and the inauguration of the new age). But whereas in *Daniel* the "son of man" (the "saints of the Most High" —see Note 12) is (are) *given* the Kingdom, here the Son of Man is the being who *establishes* it, as the following verses indicate. This usage actually involves a contradiction in terms, for the being thus designated is not a "son of man" at all in the sense in which the term had long been used (see again Note 10 in Chapter XV), but is a being having supernatural qualities. He is a man only in "appearance" (verse 1).

Since the Son of Man has been "chosen" by God, he is also called the "Elect One."

Nor humbly acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them.

6 And he shall put down the countenance of the strong,
And shall fill them with shame.
And darkness shall be their dwelling,
And worms shall be their bed,
And they shall have no hope of rising from their beds,
Because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits.[22]

48:1 And in that place I saw the fountain of righteousness
Which was inexhaustible:
And around it were many fountains of wisdom:
And all the thirsty drank of them,
And were filled with wisdom,
And their dwellings were with the righteous and holy and elect.

2 And at that hour that Son of Man was named
In the presence of the Lord of Spirits,
And his name before the Head of Days.

3 Yea, before the sun and the signs were created,
Before the stars of the heaven were made,
His name was named before the Lord of Spirits.

4 He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall,
And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
And the hope of those who are troubled of heart.

5 All who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship before him,
And will praise and bless and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits.

6 And for this reason hath he been chosen and hidden before Him,[23]
Before the creation of the world and for evermore.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SON OF MAN

Enoch 69:26-29

69:26 And there was great joy amongst them,
And they blessed and glorified and extolled
Because the name of that Son of Man had been revealed unto them.

22. The supernatural character of the Son of Man is seen especially in the following verses, where he is regarded as pre-existent, having existed even before the creation of the world (verses 2, 3, and 6).

23. To say that the Son of Man has been "hidden" means that he has not yet made his appearance upon the earth; he *will* appear when the time of catastrophic intervention arrives.

27 And he sat on the throne of his glory,
And the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man,
And he caused the sinners to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth,
And those who have led the world astray.
28 With chains shall they be bound,
And in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned,
And all their works vanish from the face of the earth.
29 And from henceforth there shall be nothing corruptible;
For that Son of Man has appeared,
And seated himself on the throne of his glory,
And all evil shall pass away before his face,
And the word of that Son of Man shall go forth
And be strong before the Lord of Spirits.[24]

24. In this account there is seen, in anticipation, the realization of the eschatological hope. In the final judgment all that is evil shall be destroyed and the new and final age shall be established. The Son of Man shall reign. In all of this it can be seen that the "Son of Man" concept of a Messiah is quite different from the earlier "son of David" idea. Both types of thought, however, are seen to be reflected in the New Testament.

CHAPTER XX

THE PSALMS

The book of *Psalms* is an anthology of Hebrew devotional poetry. In it there are revealed the thoughts and feelings and aspirations of a deeply religious people. Besides the four Gospels of the New Testament, perhaps there is no book of the Bible which is so generally read by Christians today.

The book of *Psalms* is also called the *Psalter*. The word "psalter" means literally a stringed instrument such as was used to accompany the singing of songs or poems, but by association of ideas the term has been made to refer to the songs or poems themselves. The word "psalm" really means "a pulling or twanging with the fingers," but it is commonly used now to designate a religious poetic composition.

The Psalter is sometimes spoken of as the hymnbook of the Second Temple (see the introduction to Chapter XVII), for it was during the period of the Second Temple that it gradually came into being, and many of the Psalms in it were undoubtedly used in connection with worship in the Temple. It may have been intended primarily, however, for use in private devotions.

The book of *Psalms* as we now have it really consists of five books or divisions (1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106; 107–150), each division ending with a doxology, and the last Psalm (150) serving as a doxology to the entire book. Furthermore, it represents a combination of what were once separate collections of Psalms,—the David Psalter, the second David Psalter, the Korah Psalter, the Asaph Psalter, etc. When a particular Psalm, therefore, is designated in the Bible as a "Psalm of David" or a "Psalm of Asaph," for example, the meaning, probably, is that it was taken from the collection known as the David Psalter or the Asaph Psalter, not that David or Asaph was the author.

The writers of most of the Psalms are unknown. It is true that by some people all of them have been ascribed to David, just as all of the laws of the Pentateuch have sometimes been traced to Moses, and just as all "wisdom" writings have sometimes been regarded as the work of Solomon. Undoubtedly David did write psalms, but it is clear from the content of most (if not all) of the Psalms of the Psalter that they were composed by other (later) writers. Some, in fact, were written only shortly before the final edition of the Psalter appeared in the second century, B.C.

We should be better able to understand the separate Psalms if we knew exactly when and under what circumstances each was written. Unfortunately we have almost no information in this regard. (It is true that in some editions of the Psalter many of the Psalms are given titles relating them to specific occasions in David's life. These titles, however, have been added by the editors. Believing that the Psalms were the compositions of David, these editors tried to imagine, on the basis of the Psalms' contents, the period in David's career when he *might* have written them.)

In the Psalms one finds the *parallelism* which is characteristic of Hebrew poetry. See again the introduction to Chapter XI for a brief description of parallelism.

In connection with many of the Psalms there appears the word "Selah." The exact meaning of this term is not known. Perhaps it was intended to direct the worshipers to utter some kind of unison cry at the point where it occurs. (Such a cry might have been employed very much as the words "Amen" or "Hallelujah" are sometimes used today.) Possibly the term was introduced to indicate the point in the service when some sacrificial act should be performed. The more common view, however, is that the word was inserted

as a musical notation, indicating a pause in the singing while the accompanying instruments played a short interlude.

There are many types of Psalms, and numerous classifications have been proposed. In this text it is possible to reproduce only a few examples of some of the more prominent types. The following classification, however, may prove useful for future reference:

A. Hymns
   1. Hymns of Praise to God (33; 90; 92; 103; 111; 112; 113; 115; 117; 134; 135; 136; 139; 145; 150)
   2. Hymns of God in Nature (8; 19:1-6; 29; 104)
   3. Hymns of Jahweh's Ascension to the Throne (47; 93; 96; 97; 98; 99)
   4. Liturgies of Entrance into the Temple (15; 24; 100)
   5. Hymns for Pilgrims to Jerusalem (48; 84; 87; 122)
   6. Festal Hymns (114; 149)
   7. Hymns of National Thanksgiving (65; 67; 118; 124)
   8. Hymns of Personal Thanksgiving (30; 32; 34; 40:1-11; 66; 107; 116; 138)
   9. Hymns in Praise of the Law (1; 19:7-14; 119)
   10. Hymns in the Prophetic Spirit (81; 95)
   11. Historical Hymns (78; 105)
   12. Hymns Suggesting the "Day of Jahweh" (46; 68; 75; 76)

B. Kings' Psalms (2; 18; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 132; 144:1-11)

C. Lamentations
   1. National Lamentations (44; 60; 74; 79; 80; 83; 94; 106; 108; 126)
   2. Individual Lamentations because of Personal Enemies (3; 7; 13; 27:1-6; 27:7-14; 31; 40:12-17; 41; 54; 70; 86; 120; 142; 143)
   3. Individual Lamentations because of Ungodly Enemies (5; 9-10; 11; 12; 17; 22; 28; 35; 36; 42-43; 52; 55; 56; 57; 58; 59; 64; 69; 71; 109; 123; 140; 141)
   4. Individual Lamentations because of Sickness (6; 38; 39; 88; 102)
   5. Individual Lamentations because of Sins (26; 51; 130)
   6. Individual Lamentations because of Trouble (14(=53); 77)
   7. Individual Lamentations because of the Suffering of Israel (129; 137)

D. Prophetic Poems (50; 85)

E. Prayers from Deeply Spiritual Natures (61; 62; 63)

F. Psalms of Trust (4; 16; 23; 91; 121; 125; 131)

G. Psalms of Punishment and Reward (37; 49; 73; 127; 128; 133; 144:12-15)

GOD IN NATURE[1]—Psalm 19:1-6

19:1 The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
2 Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;[2]

1. This is one of the finest Nature Psalms to be found in the Psalter. The writer is stating that all of Nature (heaven and earth alike) reveal to the receptive mind the greatness and the glory of God.

2. The meaning in this verse seems to be that Nature's voice is not audible to the physical ear (yet the message fills the entire world).

yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and there is nothing hid from its heat.[3]

GOD IN THE MORAL REALM[4]—Psalm 19:7-14

The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring for ever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.[5]
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can discern his errors?
clear thou me from hidden faults.
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;[6]
let them not have dominion over me!

3. These six lines reflect Babylonian thought, which represented the sun as a god. The psalmist, however, pictures God as behind the sun; through it He reveals His majesty.

4. In the Bible this Psalm has been joined with the previous one because of similarity of theme: God reveals Himself *both* in Nature and in the Moral Law. (Note the differences in rhythm and in the terms used for the designation of deity.)

5. Verses 7-9 describe the Law by the use of six terms, each one illustrating a different aspect of the Law.

6. "Presumptuous sins" means wilful sins of rebellion or pride.

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.[7]

THE INFINITE MERCY OF GOD[8]—Psalm 103

103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
3 who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the Pit,[9]
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
5 who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.
7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
9 He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor requite us according to our iniquities.
11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
13 As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.
14 For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

7. This well-known verse describes the perfect offering to God as rightness of word and thought. This is the true "sacrifice."

8. In this, another of the most beautiful of the Psalms, the thought throughout is that of the goodness and mercy of God.

9. That is, from Sheol (death). See Note 5 in Chapter IV.

15 As for man, his days are like grass;
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.
17 But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting
upon those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children,
18 to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments.

19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.
20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his word,
hearkening to the voice of his word!
21 Bless the LORD, all his hosts,
his ministers that do his will!
22 Bless the LORD, all his works,
in all places of his dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!

GOD IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCENE[10]

Psalm 46

46:1 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
(The LORD *of hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob is our refuge.) *Selah*

10. Perhaps this should be classified as a National Psalm, reflecting the author's confidence in Jahweh at the time of Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine in 701 B.C. (see the introduction to Chapter XIII). It is possible, however, that the writer is thinking of the time of the end, the "Day of Jahweh," when God will reveal Himself and establish His reign throughout the world. In any case, it is "one of the most powerful hymns of faith that ever were sung." It embodies more than a merely national outlook, for it describes the world-wide supremacy of Jahweh (especially in verse 10). It was this Psalm which inspired Martin Luther to write his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

The second and third divisions of the Psalm end with the refrain found in verses 7 and 11. In this all the worshipers probably joined when the Psalm was sung (hence the italics in this text). It is possible that the same refrain originally appeared at the end of the first division also; hence it is included here at this point (at the end of verse 3).

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,[11]
the holy habitation of the Most High.
5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;
God will help her right early.
6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
7 *The* LORD *of hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how he has wrought desolations in the earth.
9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
he burns the chariots with fire!
10 "Be still, and know that I am God.[12]
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth!"
11 *The* LORD *of hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

A SONG FOR PILGRIMS[13]—Psalm 121

121:1 I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help come?
2 My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot be moved,
he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade
on your right hand.
6 The sun shall not smite you by day,
nor the moon by night.

11. The "river" is the symbol of the divine presence, suggesting the life-giving quality of God's activity.

12. That is, "refrain from all vain striving and doubt."

13. High points in the lives of all Jews were the occasions when they made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the "Holy City." This is one of the Psalms which were sung by pilgrims as they came within sight of "the hills" upon which the city was built, especially the one upon which the Temple itself stood. Picture the scene as you read!

7 The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
8 The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for evermore.

A LITURGY OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE[14]—Psalm 24

24:1 (Priests) The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein;
2 for he has founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the rivers.

3 (Worshipers) Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

4 (Priests) He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,
and does not swear deceitfully.
5 He will receive blessing from the LORD,
and vindication from the God of his salvation.

6 (Worshipers) Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.[15] *Selah*

7 (Choir, outside the Temple) Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

8 (A priest, within) Who is the King of glory?

(Choir) The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!
9 Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

14. This Psalm was undoubtedly used as a procession, accompanying the Ark (and perhaps celebrating a victory), approached the Temple hill. The words were probably sung antiphonally, perhaps as suggested in the parenthetical notations inserted here in the text. It is one of the most famous processional hymns that we have. (It is possible that the Psalm as it now stands is made up of at least two originally independent compositions: (1) verses 1-6, and (2) verses 7-10.)

15. The procession now moves on and approaches the gates of the Temple. The Choir bids the gates open in order that God (whose presence is symbolized by the Ark) may enter. (Many scholars regard verse 6 as a continuation of the Priests' words of verses 4 and 5.)

10 (A priest) Who is the King of glory?

(Choir) The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory![16] *Selah*

AGONY—AND TRIUMPH[17]—Psalm 22

22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
2 O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

3 Yet thou art holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In thee our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
5 To thee they cried, and were saved;
in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.

6 But I am a worm, and no man;
scorned by men, and despised by the people.
7 All who see me mock at me,
they make mouths at me, they wag their heads;
8 "He committed his cause to the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"[18]

9 Yet thou art he who took me from the womb;
thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breasts.
10 Upon thee was I cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God.
11 Be not far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

16. The gates of the Temple open and the procession enters for worship.

17. This Psalm consists of at least two parts: (1) verses 1-21 and (2) verses 22-31 (probably an editorial addition). In the first part the psalmist cries out in the midst of his bitter affliction; he appeals for deliverance (verses 19-21). The second part describes the deliverance and ultimate triumph.

18. These words (verse 8) are intended as ridicule, uttered by those who mock.

13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.[19]

14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax,
it is melted within my breast;
15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

16 Yea, dogs are round about me;
a company of evildoers encircle me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my raiment they cast lots.

19 But thou, O LORD, be not far off!
O thou my help, hasten to my aid!
20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion,
my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen!

22 I will tell of thy name to my brethren;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee:
23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
all you sons of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!
24 For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted;
and he has not hid his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.

25 From thee comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!
May your hearts live for ever!

19. That is, many enemies ("bulls") encompass and devour.

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.
28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

29 Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and he who cannot keep himself alive.
30 Posterity shall serve him;
men shall tell of the LORD to the coming generation,
31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
that he has wrought it.[20]

DE PROFUNDIS[21]—Psalm 130

130:1 Out of the depths I cry to thee, O LORD!
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let thy ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!
3 If thou, O LORD, shouldst mark iniquities,
LORD, who could stand?
4 But there is forgiveness with thee,
that thou mayest be feared.[22]

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
6 my soul waits for the LORD
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

20. This Psalm is especially important because of its influence upon the New Testament material. On the cross Jesus is represented as quoting from the first verse *(Mark* 15:34 and *Matthew* 27:46), either because that verse gave expression to his sense of agony or because he found in the Psalm as a whole a fitting expression of the certainty of God's ultimate triumph and deliverance. Other parts of the Psalm also influenced the gospel writers as they told the story of the crucifixion (verses 7 and 8 may be compared with *Mark* 15:29, *Matthew* 27:39,43, and *Luke* 23:35; verse 18 may be compared with *Mark* 15:24, *Matthew* 27:35, and *Luke* 23:34).

21. This is a cry of penitence, a plea for the forgiveness of sins which the psalmist knows may be found in God. The Psalm is frequently designated by the title, *de profundis* (Latin for "out of the depths").

22. Jahweh may be worshiped ("feared") with confidence and hope *because* He is a forgiving God.

7 O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is plenteous redemption.
8 And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

A PSALM OF THE TWO WAYS[23]—Psalm 1

1:1 Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
3 He is like a tree
planted by streams of water,
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff which the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

THE FINAL DOXOLOGY[24]—Psalm 150

150:1 Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his exceeding greatness!

23. Although it is not long, this Psalm serves as a summary of several of the basic concepts of Judaism: (1) There are two "ways" of life,—the way of the righteous (verses 1-3), and the way of the unrighteous (verses 4-6). (2) The Law constitutes the basis for the good life, and the godly man meditates upon it "day and night" (recall the treatment of the legalistic emphasis in the introduction to Chapter XVII). (3) The wicked perish,—the righteous prosper. On the whole, the Psalm stresses the legalistic character of Jewish religion.

24. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, *Psalm* 150 serves as a final doxology for the entire Psalter. Above all things Jahweh should be praised. The list of instruments given in verses 3-5 helps to provide a picture of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem.

3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
4 Praise him with timbrel and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
5 Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

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